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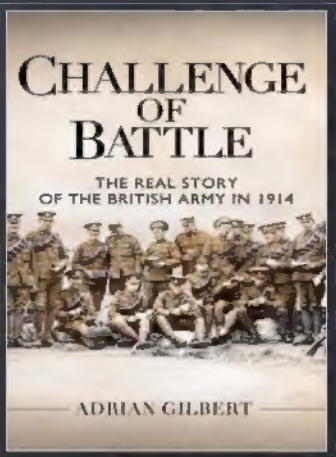

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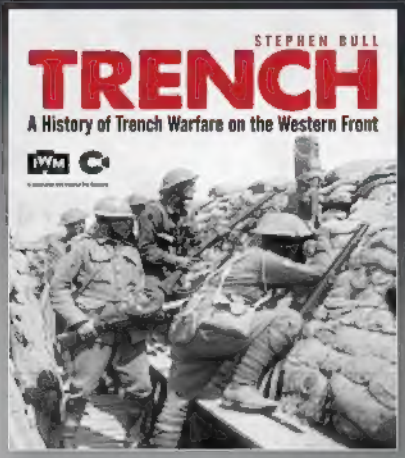

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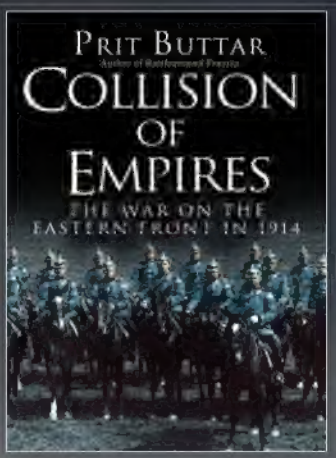

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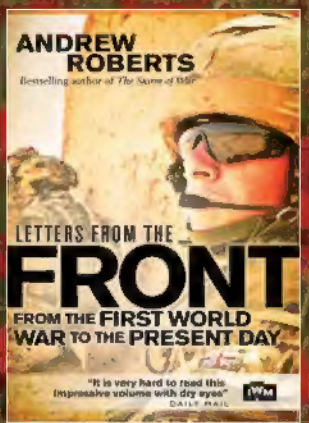

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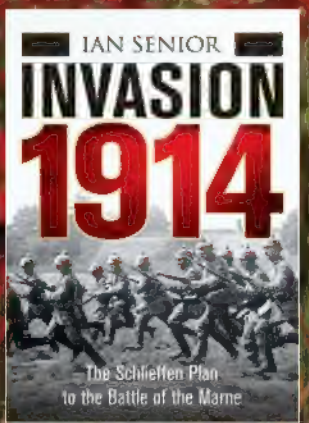

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HISTORY of WAR

Welcome

Few characters throughout history have a life quite as colourful as that of Julius Caesar. Becoming the head of his family aged just 16, he initially became a priest but, when stripped of his wealth by Sulla, opted to join the Roman army, fearing for his life if he remained in Rome. Much was to follow. He was kidnapped by pirates, had three wives, had a relationship with Cleopatra, massively extended the extent of the Roman Empire and caused a civil war that lasted four years before he was eventually appointed Dictator of Rome. He was, of course, stabbed to death at the age of 55 on the Ides of March. But that's just part of the story – we present you with the full account, starting on page 20.

Elsewhere in this issue we have no fewer than three features relating to D-Day and, as ever, a whole lot more besides.

Paul Pettengale *Editorial Director*
paul.pettengale@anthem-publishing.com

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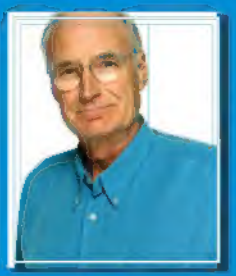
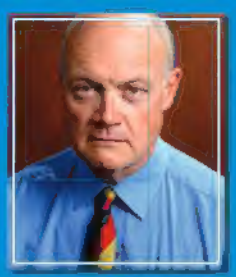


▶ PETER SNOW
Historian, television and radio presenter and author. Peter Snow needs little introduction. He and his son, Dan, contribute to this issue with a feature that covers the battle of the Imjin River during the Korean war between the British and the Chinese.

▶ NICK SOLDINGER
Acclaimed journalist Nick Soldinger has been writing about war for many years. For this issue he has been immersing himself in the history of Julius Caesar whilst writing our cover feature on how the great general and politician transformed Rome (p20).



▶ DR DUNCAN ANDERSON
Author and Head of the Department of War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Dr Anderson picks up the story of the D-Day Landings with his feature on the battles in the *Bocage* in this issue of *History of War* (p32).

Subscribe
SAVE MONEY! GET THREE ISSUES OF *HISTORY OF WAR* FOR £3 (PAGE 44).

The brutal conflict in the *bocage* – the fields of Normandy – raged after the D-Day Landings in June 1944.

AP

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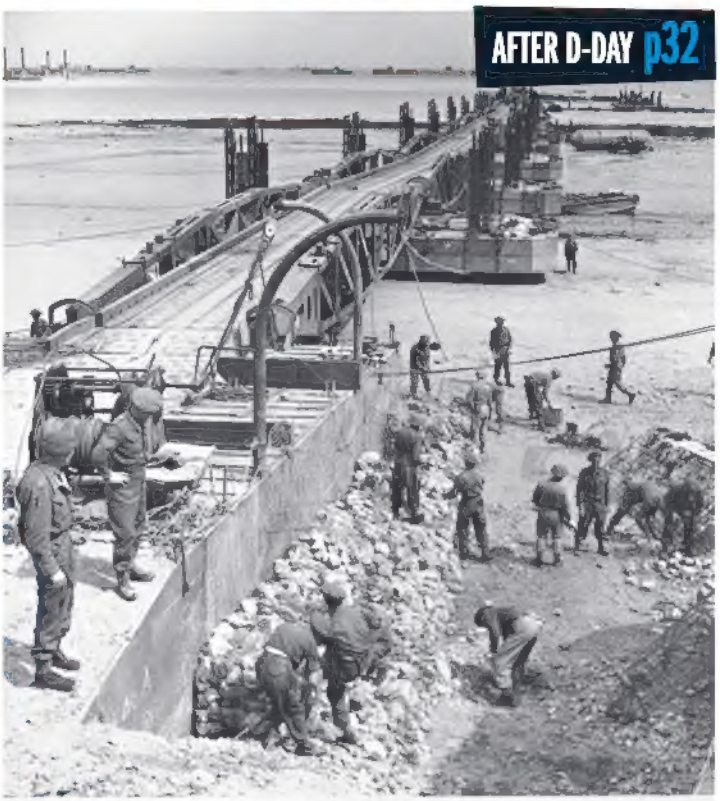

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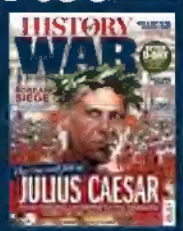

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  The D-Day landings on 6 June 1944 were an overwhelming success, but the job was only partly done. As the Allies moved across Normandy, they faced a series of deadly challenges **32**

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▶ Denotes on the cover

Getty

WAR FOCUS

THE FRANKLIN FLOUNDERS

Taken **19 March 1945**

Troops look on helplessly as the American aircraft-carrier the USS Franklin lies stricken in the Pacific. The vessel was carrying out a manoeuvre 50 miles off the coast of Japan – the closest any US carrier got to the country during the Second World War – when it was struck by two 500lb bombs dropped by a Japanese plane. While the ship didn't sink, official Navy figures totalled the number of dead at 724.

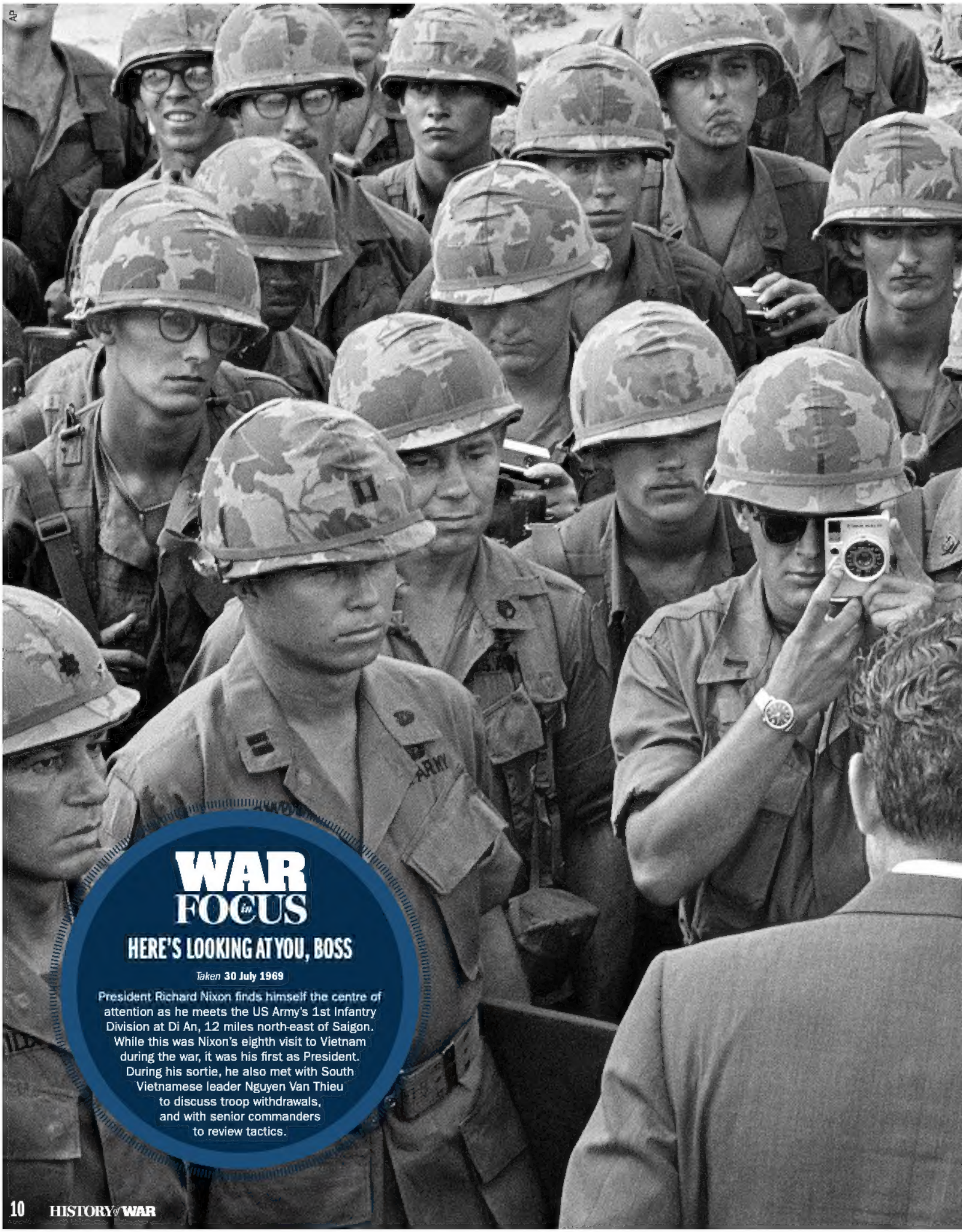
Getty

WAR in FOCUS

HELL ON THE HIGH STREET

Taken **15 October 1940**

It's hard to imagine these days but, during the Second World War, the inhabitants of Britain's cities would wake up to this kind of scene on an almost daily basis. The morning after a German air raid during the Battle of Britain, a number 88 bus lies in a large crater in Balham High Street, South London. The explosion was so powerful, it destroyed part of the Tube station underneath.



AP

WAR in FOCUS

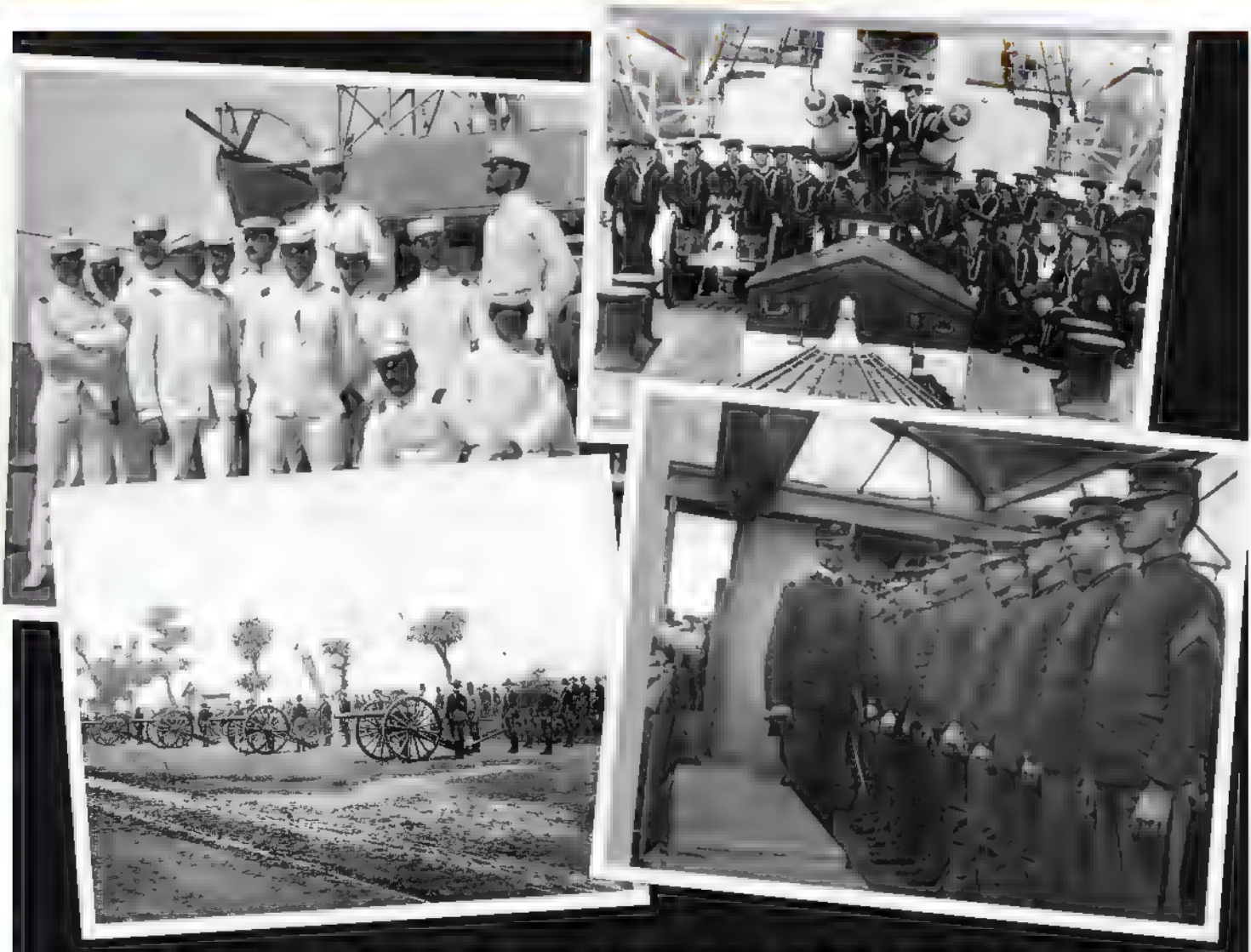
HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, BOSS

Taken **30 July 1969**

President Richard Nixon finds himself the centre of attention as he meets the US Army's 1st Infantry Division at Di An, 12 miles north-east of Saigon. While this was Nixon's eighth visit to Vietnam during the war, it was his first as President. During his sortie, he also met with South Vietnamese leader Nguyen Van Thieu to discuss troop withdrawals, and with senior commanders to review tactics.

DISPATCHES

Military news and events from around the globe, including a haul of lost photos, the sale and return of wartime love letters, plus a new theory on the decline of the Roman Empire



RARE PHOTOGRAPHS OF SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR COME TO LIGHT

A neglected archive has revealed a hoard of photographs of the US Navy taken during the Spanish-American War.

During preparations for a major renovation at the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington DC, a box containing around 150 original glass-plate photographs was uncovered by archivists Dave Colamaria and Jon Roscoe. The pictures, which were individually wrapped in tissue paper, dated and captioned, had been taken by Douglas White, a war correspondent for the *San Francisco Examiner* newspaper during the conflict.

Dating from 1898 – when the war started – the pictures capture vessels such as USS Raleigh and USS Boston (both of which took part in the Battle of Manila), US sailors, crews and apprentice boys, as well as the Spanish Fleet. The collection will now be moved into new archival enclosures and display units.

The Spanish-American War was the result of American intervention in the Cuban War of Independence.

DID CONCRETE OR LEAD CAUSE THE DEMISE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE?

Scientists debate whether it was poison or construction that prompted downfall

The popular theory that lead contaminated the water in the city of Rome, poisoning the residents and bringing down the Empire, may not be entirely accurate.

The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences journal recently published a study on lead in Ancient Rome's waters. Samples of water taken from the Roman harbour basin at Portus, an industrious port in Imperial Rome, were found to contain 100 times as much lead as water from nearby springs. However, while these levels were high, they were probably still not enough to bring about the downfall of the civilisation. Francis Albarède, head of the study at Claude Bernard University, Lyon, said, "It's marginal. You would start being worried about drinking that water all your life."

Meanwhile, historian Dr Penelope Davies of the University of Texas believes that the rise in the use of concrete as a building material contributed to Rome's downfall, weakening the city's political system, with Julius Caesar and Pompey – Caesar's main rival for leading the Roman Republic – competing over increasingly impressive concrete structures. Pompey built the city's first permanent theatre in 55BC. Caesar then built a new forum and redeveloped the Ovile so that citizens could vote. This was followed by various projects, including a harbour at Ostia.

Says Davies, "What [Caesar] was counting on is concrete. One could even say that it played a significant role in bringing down the Republic."

HISTORY FAN COMMEMORATES D-DAY WITH MILITARY TATTOO

BRISTOL STUDENT'S HOMAGE TO SECOND WORLD WAR WARRIORS RUNS SKIN-DEEP

Many people will be marking the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy this year, but few will choose to do it in such a dramatic (and painful!) way as history enthusiast Jason Purnell.

The 27-year-old from Bristol hired a tattoo artist to create a huge work of art on his skin, depicting scenes from the Second World War, with soldiers, tanks, Higgins boats and Spitfire planes. The artwork is topped off by the words "June 6 1944" – the date of the landings in Normandy – plus a vivid red poppy, the only bright colour in the work.

The unique tattoo, which covers Purnell's entire back, cost around £1,600 and took nearly a year to be completed, but it's reported that he is delighted with the results.

The Normandy invasion, part of Operation Overlord, was the biggest seaborne invasion in history, with almost 160,000 soldiers taking part in the assault on the French coast by both sea and air.

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News in Brief

GREAT SCOTT SHACK UP WITH ROBERT THE BRUCE IN PERTHSHIRE

If you're a fan of Scottish history and are planning on a wee break this summer, the Cromlix hotel in Perthshire might be the perfect destination. Tennis ace Andy Murray, who bought the hotel for £1.8million last February, personally named all 15 rooms after famous Scots. And he reserved Robert the Bruce, the Scots King who defeated the English 700 years ago at Bannockburn, for one of the hotel's most impressive suites.

CITY HALL RETURNED TO ITS FORMER GLORY

An historic building in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been restored to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War. The City Hall, which was converted into the National Library in 1949, went up in flames in 1992 after being shelled by Serbs during a siege of the city. The neo-Moorish structure is of significant historical interest because Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated soon after leaving a mayoral reception there – an event that triggered the start of hostilities in Europe.

RAF BARKSTON HEATH TO OPEN SECOND WORLD WAR CENTRE

The role played by south Lincolnshire airfields in WWII is due to be commemorated at a new education centre in Grantham. Focusing on airborne offences during Operation Overlord and Operation Market Garden, the centre will be a reminder of the contribution of serving personnel from RAF Barkston Heath in the battles of 1944. The centre will open on 31 May with a flypast by a Douglas C-47 Dakota aircraft.

TALE OF BROTHERS' SACRIFICE

A sale of war medals has uncovered the story of three brothers who died fighting together in WWI. The Legge brothers, from Dorset, joined up in August 1914. A year later, Private Bertram Legge, 30, and Private Cyril Legge, 21, went into battle together in Gallipoli, Turkey, and were killed. Middle brother George survived the campaign to win the Military Medal but, tragically, he died a month before the end of the war, in October 1918, during the Battle of the Selle, France.

Events

▶ 4-6 JULY
Buckfastleigh Military Weekend
Iconic Devonshire military vehicle weekend, held in collaboration with the South Devon Steam Railway. Relive wartime Britain with period vehicles, trains, trucks and dancing.
www.southdevonrailway association.org

▶ 4-6 JULY
The Yorkshire Wartime Experience
Huge display of military vehicles, WWI and WWII battle re-enactments and sales of memorabilia. Plus 1940s entertainment and a Battle of Britain flypast. Huntsworth Lane, Bradford.
www.ywe-event.info

▶ 5-6 JULY
Capel Vintage Military Vehicle Show
Two-day display of tanks, Jeeps and armoured vehicles, with period entertainment. Aldhurst Farm, Surrey.
adenjohn@virginmedia.com

▶ 5-6 JULY
Massed bands, dog displays, WWI re-enactments, motorbike displays plus the Red Devils parachute team. Abbey Field, Colchester.
www.colchestermilitary tournament.co.uk

▶ 6 JULY
Chatham Militaria Fairs
Monthly military fair taking place indoors at slipway 5 of Chatham Dockyard, River Medway in Kent.
www.chathammilitariafairs.co.uk

▶ 11-13 JULY
Royal International Air Tattoo
Don't miss the massive annual gathering of military and civilian aircraft from all over the world. Fairford, Gloucestershire.
www.airtattoo.com

▶ 11-13 JULY
"We'll Meet Again"
Relive the 1940s at this gathering of vintage military and civilian vehicles. There will also be period re-enactors. Thorpe Camp, Lincolnshire.
www.1940weekend.co.uk

▶ 16-20 JULY
The War And Peace Revival
Five-day military and vintage festival. RAF Westenhanger, Folkestone Racecourse, Kent. ***01304 813337; www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk***

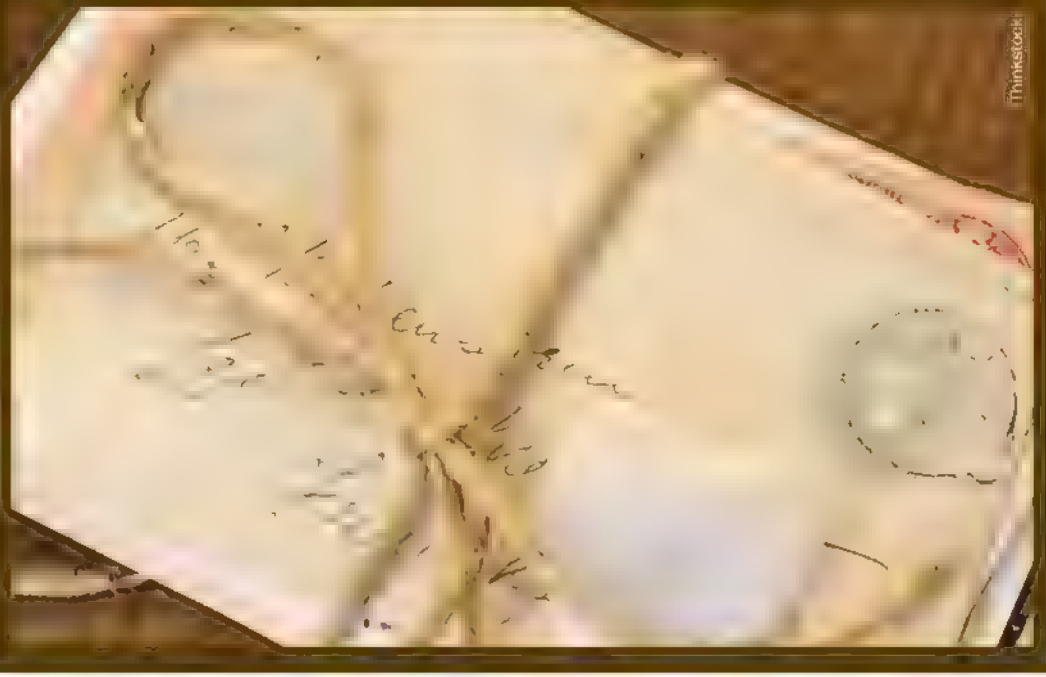
WWI LOVE LETTER AND POPPY SELL FOR £6,000 AT AUCTION

Poignant missive from US soldier to his sweetheart goes under the hammer

An American soldier's love letter and poppy sent to his sweetheart back home were the stars of a recent Derbyshire auction. Discovered in a treasure trove of militaria belonging to a Derbyshire man, the letter – written on YMCA paper headlined "On Active Service with the American Expeditionary Force" – and the enclosed 100-year-old poppy, which still had its red colour, fetched £6,000.

Sadly, nothing is known about the letter's recipient, or the author, Chas, who wrote: "I will be careful and you must be good and write very often. Tell me everything as you do, and let the French poppy which I am enclosing represent my kisses for you – dearest girl, all my love. Remember me to your mother – yours, Chas."

The centenary auction at Hanson's Auctioneers in Etwall, Derbyshire, attracted a large crowd to view the items, which also included a First World War soldier's notepad (sold for £600), and a Red Cross nurse's album of First World War events, which fetched £4,000.



Norwich schoolboy turns bedroom into Admiral Nelson museum

When nine-year-old Shae Williams first read about Admiral Nelson in a history book, it was the beginning of both an obsession and an entrepreneurial idea.

He began to decorate his bedroom with items of Nelson memorabilia that he'd collected, including a piece of metal from Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory. And when he'd filled it up, he decided to open it as a museum.

Shae says, "My museum is the best. I've got an original copper from the Victory, a ship and sea biscuits that you can eat for free."

Guarding the door is his younger brother, Kye, 6, while Shae collects fees of £2 for adults, 50p for children and £4 for a family ticket to view his collection. He's saving the proceeds in the hope of buying an original piece of wood from the ship, which will cost him somewhere in the region of £100.

He has the full support of his mum, Karen, 43, who says, "We like to encourage Shae because I'd rather he was doing this than playing on his Xbox."

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Events

▶ 19-20 JULY
Woodhall Spa '40s Festival
Weekend-long "home front" event with living-history groups, re-enactments, vehicles, stalls and more. Jubilee Park, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire.
www.woodhall-spa-40s-festival.com

▶ 25-27 JULY
West Lancs Area Weekend
Three-day meeting of the Military Vehicle Trust at Ince Blundell Village Hall, Lancashire. Includes a road run on the Saturday afternoon.
www.westlancsmvt.com

▶ 27 JULY
Bexley Medals and Militaria
WWI and WWII medals, weapons, helmets, badges and insignia on sale. Hildenborough Village Hall, Kent.
www.bexleymedalsandmilitaria.co.uk

▶ 27-28 JULY
War Machines 2014
Military vehicles, fighter aircraft, wartime training films plus Brin the life-saving Afghan dog! Nottles Park and Davidstow Airfield, Cornwall.
www.cornwallatwarmuseum.co.uk

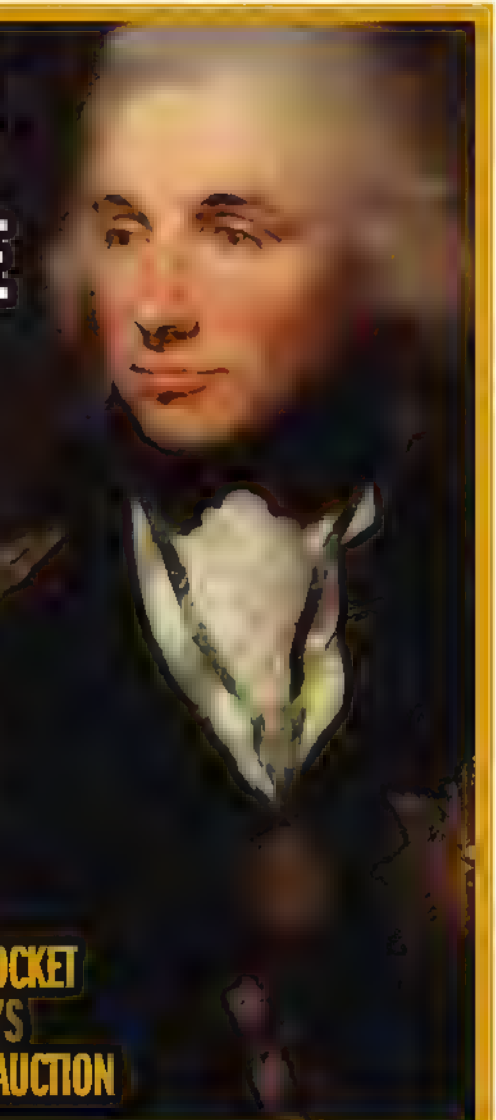
AND DON'T FORGET THESE EVENTS LATER IN THE YEAR...

▶ 1-3 AUGUST
Military and Flying Machines Show
See hundreds of aircraft at this massive annual event. Damyns Hall Aerodrome, Upminster, Essex.
www.militaryandflyingmachines.org.uk

▶ 4 AUGUST
First World War Commemoration
Features WWI tanks in action, the Great War Cavalry display team, plus living history, special talks and more. Bovington Tank Museum, Dorset.
www.tankmuseum.org

▶ 23-25 AUGUST
Military Odyssey
Take a journey through 2,000 years of military history, featuring 4,000 Romans, Vikings, Napoleonic infantry, and American Civil War and WWII soldiers – all over 200 acres!
The Kent Show Ground, Detling, Kent.
www.military-odyssey.com

LOCK OF ADMIRAL NELSON'S HAIR GOES UP FOR SALE



Should you have £15,000 lying around that you don't know what to do with, Amazon could have the answer for you, in the form of a lock of Admiral Nelson's hair.

The item description says: "This is a generous, fine, blond lock of Lord Nelson's hair. The hair is housed in a beautifully carved, circular agate box decorated with a gold band. The box measures 4.5cm in diameter. A fragmentary enamel plaque attached to the lid reads "N...05". The box is thought to date from between 1800 and 1810. This hair closely conforms to the other known examples of Nelson's hair, and the box is similar in form to a locket that contained a lock of Nelson's hair, which sold for £44,000 at auction in January 2011."

If you can't think of what you'd do with a lock of Admiral Nelson's hair, there's a schoolboy in Norwich who would very much like it for his bedroom! You can buy it now for $25,000 at Amazon.com.

THE BOX IS SIMILAR IN FORM TO A LOCKET THAT CONTAINED A LOCK OF NELSON'S HAIR, WHICH SOLD FOR £44,000 AT AUCTION

WWI soldier stood on live grenade to save comrades

He survived to become star footballer

A story has emerged of how a brave First World War soldier saved the lives of his brothers in arms by standing on a grenade to protect them. Lance Corporal James Collins, from Dundee, was seriously injured in the blast on the Western Front on 11 November 1917, while serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was advised to have his right foot and lower leg amputated, but refused and endured 14 operations over two years to save the limb.

The Lance Corporal had been escorting a captive when the man escaped and pulled the pin on a grenade. At this point, Collins risked his own life to step on the bomb and save the two soldiers nearby. In recognition of his heroic actions, he was awarded the Albert Medal by King George V at Buckingham Palace, and the rare decoration was recently sold at auction for nearly £22,000. Only 70 of the medals were awarded between 1866 and 1971, before they were replaced by the George Cross.

After the war, Collins went on to play professional football for 15 years, making his debut as a defender for Swansea City in 1920, three years after the explosion. He would eventually rise to become team captain and lead the Welsh side to an FA Cup semi-final and the old Third Division Championship.

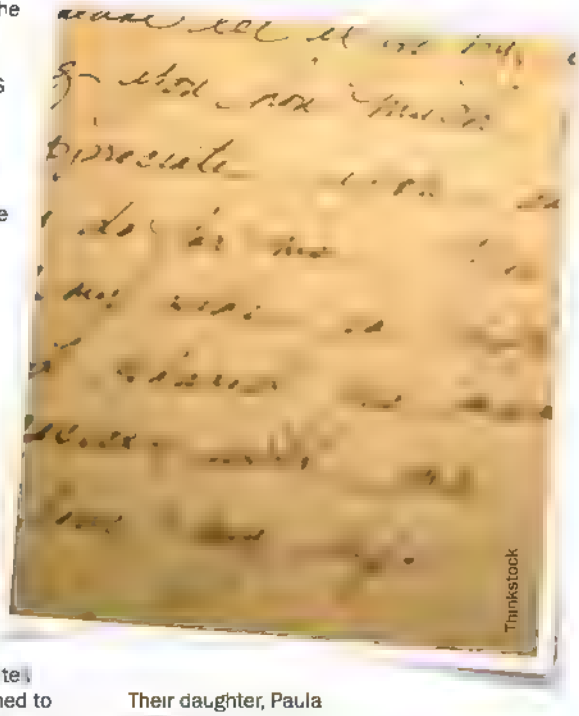
KOREAN WAR VETERAN REUNITED WITH LOVE LETTER AFTER 63 YEARS

Letter mailed from US base in Japan to be returned to its author

Here's another story to warm the cockles of your heart. While stationed in Japan's Camp Drake in November, 1951, US Army Private Gilles LeBlanc poured his feelings out in a letter to his girlfriend, Carole Petch, who was based in Toronto, Canada.

He wrote: "Honey you can't realise how much I love you and think and dream about being with you. It's hurting me all over." He then writes about their wedding preparations.

Sixty-three years later, Sandi Blood of Murrells Inlet, South Carolina bought a second-hand paperback in a book shop in the nearby town of Garden City. When she opened it, a red, white and blue air mail envelope, with an Army/Air Force Postal Service postmark and 6¢ stamp, fell out. Inside was the three-page, yellowed letter, written on vellum.



Blood was captivated by the letter, saying, "I'm a hopeless romantic, as most of my friends will tell you and my husband, too." Determined to reunite the letter with its owner, Blood turned to social media for help and a Facebook friend helped her find Gilles LeBlanc, aged 84, who was living in Detroit, Michigan.

He married his love within two weeks of returning home from his tour of duty and they had six children. They were together for 22 years but divorced in the 1970s.

Their daughter, Paula Gilles, explained that they used to go on holiday to Garden City and her mother must have accidentally left the letter in a book she'd exchanged there.

LeBlanc is delighted that Blood will hand deliver his letter, saying: "That's as sweet as hell. I feel wonderful about it. I think the lady in South Carolina is just wonderful."

WAR HORSE FARM OPENS ITS DOORS AS A MUSEUM

Fans of the book *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo will be pleased to hear that the Devon farm on which the author based part of the novel has opened up as a museum.

Mr and Mrs Ward, the owners of Parsonage Farm, have created an exhibition in the 400-year-old cob barn to show off their collection of photographs, artefacts, documents and pictures relating to the story, the local area of Iddesleigh during WWI and the horses' lives in the trenches.

The original story of the deep bond between a boy called Albert and his childhood companion – a horse called Joey – so captured the imagination of its readers that it was turned into an award-winning stage production in London's West End and, later, a Steven Spielberg film. And to add to the attractions at the farm, there's a real-life Joey to meet!

The farm was also once home to the Reverend John "Jack" Russell, the first breeder of the eponymous terriers. War Horse Valley Country Farm Park is open Saturdays and Sundays from 2pm to 6pm. Visit www.warhorsevalley.co.uk.

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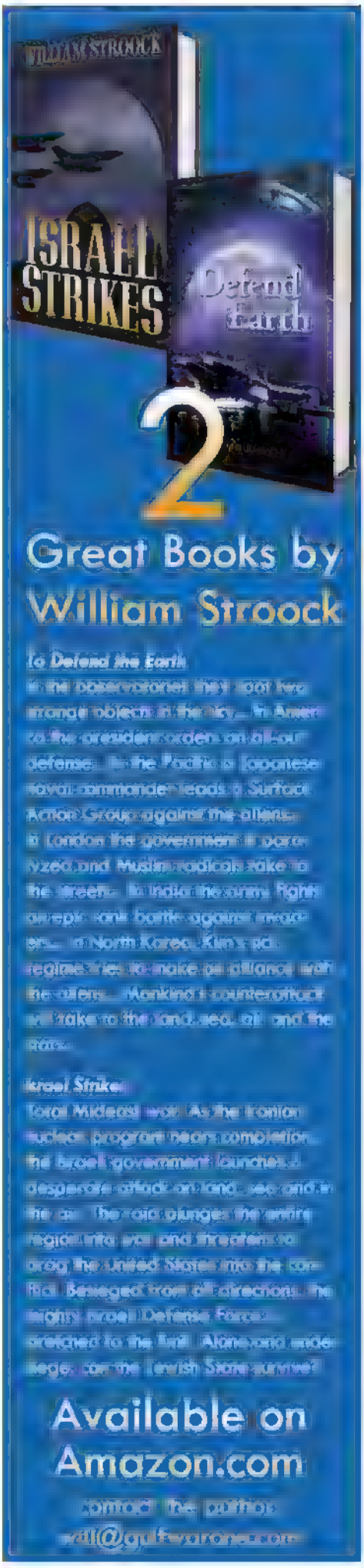

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LETTERS

Make your thoughts and opinions known by writing to *History Of War*. Email historyofwar@anthem-publishing.com or send letters to the address below

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

Dear Sir,
I first encountered *History Of War* magazine with issue three. I found it very interesting and have since acquired issues one and two. I have to say, it's an excellent publication with great depth, covering as it does war over many decades. The maps of battles are fascinating and [in issue one] I learned much about the Battle of Waterloo, which I had not appreciated before. One very slight complaint, though: could you not print captions over pictures, as (at 75 years old) I find them quite difficult to read. Otherwise, thank you very much for providing a necessary and vital magazine.
Ted Berry *Watertoowile*

CRIMEA CONFUSION

Dear Sir,
In the May 2014 issue of your magazine, it says in the article "Crisis in the Crimea" that Nicholas I was succeeded by Nicholas II in March 1855. Surely, it was Alexander II who succeeded Nicholas I, followed by Alexander III and then Nicholas II in 1894! I'm studying history at A-Level and this has confused me.
Sophie Holdway *Via e-mail*

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF WAR

Dear Sir,
I have just finished reading my copy of your fabulous new magazine. I thought your feature on the D-Day landings [issue four] was fascinating and most impressive in its detail. When you think about the World Wars, you think in terms of tens or even hundreds of thousands of casualties at a time, but your D-Day feature (and, indeed, other features on major battles and campaigns you've run in previous issues) included a really personal aspect that emphasised the fact that those who fought, and continue to fight, in wars are real people, not just names on memorials. Anyhow, do keep up the good work and I look forward to reading further in-depth features in the future.
Lesley Parsons *Via e-mail*

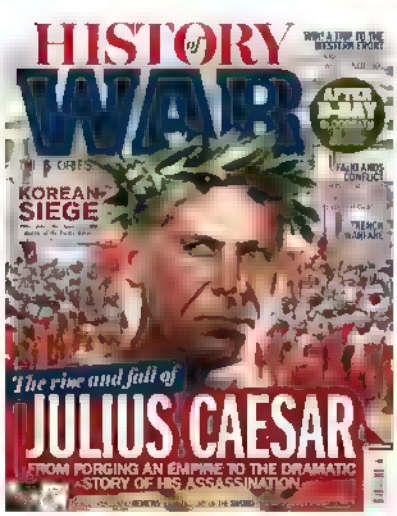
MORE GREAT BATTLES, PLEASE

Dear Sir,
Both myself and my son (who loves history at school) really enjoy your Great Battles series of articles, though we have a request... Can you please include more battles from ancient history, along the lines of your article on Alexander the Great in your very first issue? These are of particular interest because information about them is so hard to come by. Maybe you could run two Great Battle features per issue?
Jeremy Dawson *Via e-mail*

HEADING FOR THE SEAS

Dear Sir,
I'm coming towards the end of my school years – I finish my A-Levels this summer – and with the ever-increasing costs of going to university (my parents certainly can't afford to support me, and the thought of debts running into tens of thousands of pounds scares the hell out of me), I've decided to apply for a job in the Navy. I wouldn't exactly say that reading your magazine has inspired me to do so – my grandfather was in the Navy and he's mainly responsible for my decision – but I've certainly found it enlightening (if a bit frightening). So please print more articles on naval combat, and also on specific ships and vessels, as they would be of particular interest to me.
Andy Shepherd *Cirencester*

Andy in Cirencester would like to see more articles on naval combat in *History Of War*. Turn to our V For Valour feature on page 46, Andy!


HISTORY of WAR
KOREAN SIEGE
The rise and fall of
JULIUS CAESAR
FROM FORGING AN EMPIRE TO THE DRAMATIC STORY OF HIS ASSASSINATION

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The rise and fall of...

JULIUS CAESAR

Ancient Rome: Like Alexander the Great before him, Julius Caesar was a man whose ambitions knew no bounds. A ruthless gambler, he used every tactic imaginable to control and conquer. But, as Nick Soldinger explains, his single-mindedness was the cause of his downfall

THE RUBICON RIVER IS a shallow, slow-flowing stretch of water that runs about 80 miles from the Apennine Mountains to the Adriatic Sea in north-eastern Italy. Its name is derived from the Latin word *rebeus*, meaning red – a reference to the local mud deposits that can turn its waters to the colour of blood.

In ancient times, the Rubicon marked the border between the Roman homeland and Roman Gaul to the north, and it was here, on 10 January 49BC, that Julius Caesar crossed into Italy at the head of his most battle-hardened legion. It was a defiant act that broke Roman law, announced his intention of a *coup d'état* and plunged Rome into a four-year civil war that would rage across the Mediterranean and change the course of western civilisation forever. Not bad for a kid from the slums.

Gaius Julius Caesar was born in Rome in July 100BC. Although his family were of noble origins, they'd not enjoyed wealth for generations, and young Julius grew up not in the wealthy splendour of the Palatine Hill but in the seedy, brothel-lined back alleys of the city's notorious Subura district. The Rome of Caesar's childhood was a thrilling place. It was the world's greatest city, populated by a million souls: gladiators, slaves and Senators rubbed shoulders on its busy, sunlit streets or in the shadows cast by its bathhouses, amphitheatres and aqueducts. It was simultaneously the centre of civilisation and the most politically violent place on the planet.

Power struggle

Not much is known of Caesar's childhood, except that – like many great leaders – it was short. When he was just 15, his father died and young Julius suddenly found himself the head of the family. An early influence at this time was his uncle Gaius Marius, a Senator and champion of the people, from whom Caesar would learn the importance of the common touch. But Marius had troubles of his own. A power struggle with Rome's then-dictator, Sulla, resulted in a short ▶

MOTHER OF A MURDERER

ONE OF THE WOMEN CAESAR WAS ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED WITH WAS SERVILLA CAEPIONES, THE MOTHER OF BRUTUS – ONE OF THE MEN WHO WOULD LATER MURDER HIM.

***It was a defiant act that broke Roman law, announced Caesar's* intention of a coup d'état and plunged Rome into a four-year civil war**

Mary Evans

When Sulla's warriors stormed Rome and ousted Marius from power (pictured), Caesar was forced to flee the city

lived civil war that Caesar's uncle had no prospect of winning. His army of gladiators was swiftly crushed by Sulla's legions and Marius fled, leaving the now 16-year-old Caesar a target for the regime. So the young man fled, too, for a life in the army.

Fascinated with the military since childhood, and seizing the opportunity to make a name for himself, Caesar soon proved himself in battle. He was awarded the Civic Crown – Rome's second-highest decoration – for valour while fighting in Greece. The honour coincided with Sulla's death in 78BC, and Caesar decided to return to Rome. Before that time came, however, he became entangled in an adventure that would help make him famous, not least because it demonstrated all the traits – good and bad – that would lead him to greatness.

Kidnapped by pirates

At that time, the Mediterranean was blighted by piracy and, on his way back across the Aegean Sea, Sicilian pirates attacked Caesar's ship. Recognising that they'd taken a prisoner of high status, his captors demanded a ransom of 20 talents of silver for him – the modern equivalent of US $600,000. Caesar's response was to tell them they should ask for at least 50. It was a daring gamble that not only kept him alive, but also allowed his dominating personality to gain some control over the situation.

Caesar spent 38 days in captivity while the ransom was raised and, during that time, became the hostage from hell. Rather than cower before his captors, he would boss them about. He also made them a haunting promise. They would get their silver, he assured them, and he would get his freedom. But then he would come back for them. He would hunt them down and he would crucify them. The pirates apparently laughed at the cheek of this 22-year-old, but Caesar wasn't joking. ▶

Marius in exile after being removed from power by Sulla's men

W DIAMOND CAESAR
IN A TRADITIONAL PACK OF PLAYING CARDS, THE KING OF DIAMONDS IS OTHERWISE KNOWN AS CAESAR – BELIEVED TO BE NAMED AFTER JULIUS CAESAR.

They would get their silver, Caesar assured them, and he would get his freedom. **But then he would hunt them down and he would crucify them**

Caesar was a skilled horseman as well as a brilliant military tactician

Caesar's CONQUEST OF GAUL

Caesar's political campaigns had left him with huge debts, and he identified unconquered Gaul as a means to repay those debts and make himself rich in the process. In 58BC he invaded.

From the start, he used terror tactics and targeted key strategic points as a means of conquering the country. One of the first was the hill fort at Bibracte, 60 miles west of Dijon. Standing on a hilltop 2,500 feet above sea level, it was the highest point for 150 miles and dominated the landscape it watched over. It was held by the Helvetii tribe, who attacked him as his army approached. Caesar later described them as the bravest of all the Gallic warriors. [illegible] this early engagement, Caesar [illegible] intending to fight back, [illegible]

the most high-tech weapons available. Incendiary bombs fired from catapults, incendiary arrows and regular arrows all rained down on the Gauls. As did the pilum – thousands of two-metre-long javelins that Caesar's legionnaires were so expert at throwing. His dispatches are filled with gloating references to how terrifyingly effective these spears were at ripping through the Gauls' shields and skewering them. By the time the fighting was over, some 238,000 Gauls had been killed or captured.

By the winter of 51BC, Caesar was laying siege to another key target – Avaricum, 150 miles south of present-day Paris. By now, the Gauls had employed a scorched-earth policy to deter Caesar's army, but had left Avaricum [illegible] supplies intact, believing the citadel

impregnable. Caesar laid siege for 25 days, building a vast siege terrace to overcome the defences. When the city was finally taken, he sent his troops on a killing spree that saw them slaughter some 40,000 men, women and children inside. Just 800 were spared, and these were sent into the countryside to testify on the dangers of resistance.

Caesar's final victory came at Alesia a year later, where, against incredible odds, he won his most daring victory. Afterwards, he ordered that around 2,000 of the captured warriors have both their hands cut off and sent back to their villages as a warning to other would-be attackers. The Gallic leader Vercingetorix, meanwhile, was held captive for six years. He was then brought to Rome, paraded through the streets and strangled before a delirious mob.

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Despite being initially surprised by Belgic tribes at the Battle of the Sabis – part of the Gallic Wars – Caesar turned the tide to score a tactical victory

Caesar's INVASIONS OF BRITAIN

During Caesar's conquest of Gaul, Celts in south-eastern Britain had been sending vital support across to their fellow tribesmen. In 55BC, Caesar set out to smash the link between the two countries.

Setting off from present-day Boulogne with two legions totalling around 10,000 soldiers, he landed at Deal on the Kent coast. Here, after skirmishes with local Celtic warriors, he established a bridgehead, before sending reconnaissance units inland. As with many other would-be invaders, Caesar was to fall foul of the British weather. Four days after he landed, a storm in the English Channel forced his cavalry to turn back and damaged many of his boats anchored off Deal. Meanwhile, reconnaissance reports suggested that, while the land was rich with crops, there was also a large, bellicose population waiting for them. Without cavalry, Caesar decided to postpone the mission and, once his ships were repaired, returned to Gaul.

The following year, he returned, this time with five legions and 2,000 cavalry. Again, he landed in Deal and immediately pushed inland. Faced with such a huge army, the Celts withdrew until they reached the Stour River near Canterbury. Here, they made a futile stand and, after being routed, retreated to a hill fort at Bigbury, two miles to the west. Caesar followed them, laid siege and, once his engineers had filled in the fort's outer ditch and constructed a ramp up to its walls, quickly captured it.

Before Caesar could capitalise, however, the British weather again thwarted him. Another storm in the Channel wrecked or damaged most of his fleet. He sent his legions back to the coast, where they spent the next ten days building a fort around the beach, so that the ships could be repaired in safety. The Celts reorganised under the leadership of a chief called Cassivellaunus, but were no match for the Roman war machine or its brilliant tactician. The Romans won another battle at the Stour River, before chasing the Celts all the way up to the Thames.

Mary Evans

Caesar and his legions arrive on the Kent coast in 55BC. However, this initial attack was thwarted by the weather

Left: how a Gallic chief would have looked around the time of the wars with Caesar's men

A CHINK IN THE ARMOUR

SOME HISTORIANS BELIEVE THAT CAESAR SUFFERED FROM EPILEPSY – ALTHOUGH, BASED ON THE EVIDENCE, MEDICAL SCIENTISTS CLAIM IT WAS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN MIGRAINE HEADACHES

Gallic leader Vercingetorix surrenders to Caesar following the latter's victory at the Battle of Alesia, 52BC

As soon as he was back in Rome, he raised a fleet and sailed back to the island where he'd been imprisoned. There, he took back his silver and delivered on his promise, but with one slight amendment: crucifixion is a notoriously slow and painful death, so Caesar had the pirates' throats slit before the agony became too unbearable. Back in Rome, news of the young man's decisively brutal revenge – and his glimmer of humanity – was gossiped about on street corners for weeks. It was great PR.

Ravenous for power and keen to build on his reputation, Caesar returned to the city and took up legal advocacy. Roman society was built around the law; legal cases were the city's greatest theatre, and the mighty, open-to-all Forum its most popular stage. Here, Caesar would demonstrate that, among his many gifts, he boasted exceptional oratory skills. An unashamed populist, he used his position to ruthlessly prosecute officials accused of extortion and corruption – and the people of Rome loved him for it.

Orgy of steel and blood

Another one of Caesar's gifts was a lifelong ability to turn adversity to his own advantage. In 65BC, he was elected to a minor governmental role that required him to pay for a gladiatorial tournament from his own pocket. At this point, Caesar was not a wealthy man, but he was a fearless gambler. Popularity could bring high office, and high office meant wealth and power – so he threw the dice. He borrowed a vast sum and held the most lavish games the city had ever witnessed. In the orgy of steel and blood that followed, a bond was forged between Caesar and the citizens of Rome that would last beyond his lifetime.

***Caesar, it was rapidly becoming clear, was not only an extraordinarily ambitious man,* but one with no respect for the old order, or the rules**

By now, the momentum was with the 35-year-old from Subura and, in a daring move, he targeted one of the most important offices of state – Pontifex Maximus, the head of religion. It was a position voted for by the people of Rome, so the gambler borrowed another fortune and bought the vote. Caesar, it was rapidly becoming clear, was not only an extraordinarily ambitious man, but one with no respect for the old order, or the rules. Some watched him guardedly from a distance; others sought to control him by drawing him close.

By this time, Rome had been a Republic for nearly 500 years, its last King, the infamous Tarquin the Proud, having been overthrown and exiled by a revolt in the Senate led by Lucius Junius Brutus. The Senate was one of the oldest political institutions in Rome. Initially made up of a hundred men drawn from the city's most powerful families, its earliest role was that of advisory council to Rome's Kings. After the transition to a Republic, however, it became Rome's principal organ of political power.

Ruthless world

While the Senate's origins may have had democratic leanings, by the time of Caesar the real decision-making was being carried out in the shadows. Self appointed guardians who also happened to be the heads of Rome's ancient clans essentially ran the city. In private rooms and in opulent surroundings, these wealthy men carved up Rome's future. It was an incredibly ruthless world, and violence was an everyday political tool. To put it another way, Rome in the 1st century BC was essentially Prohibition era Chicago but with togas and chariots instead of suits and Studebakers.

Some of the city's Godfathers had already spotted Caesar's talent for ▶

TIMELINE *Julius Caesar*

100BC
Caesar is born in the slums of Rome. While his parents stem from nobility, they have long since lost their wealth.

85BC
His father dies, making Caesar the head of his family.

84BC
Caesar is appointed High Priest of Jupiter by his uncle, the Consul Gaius Marius.

84BC
Caesar marries the first of his three wives, Cornelia Cinna – the daughter of Lucius Cornelius Cinnilla, a political ally of Caesar's family.

84BC
After Gaius Marius is driven out of Rome by the dictator Sulla, Caesar is also forced to flee the city. He uses this as an excuse to fulfil his dream of joining the army.

78BC
After serving with distinction – and on hearing of Sulla's death – Caesar returns to Rome. On his way back, he is kidnapped by pirates. Their ransom is paid, but Caesar later returns and kills them.

68BC
Cornelia Cinna dies in childbirth while in labour with her and Caesar's second child. The baby is stillborn.

mesmerising the people, and had bankrolled his political campaigns. A man like that, they figured, could be useful to them, and two of the most powerful were willing to let him go further. In 60BC, Caesar entered into a pact with Crassus and Pompey the Great. The former was the wealthiest man in Rome, a corrupt slum landlord keen to abuse the Senate for further financial gain. The latter was Rome's greatest living General, a man with immense military power at his fingertips, who wanted land and gold for his legions. Caesar promised to supply these mob bosses with what they wanted in exchange for their support in delivering him consulship of the Senate – the highest elected office in Rome. A deal was struck and all three men had their wishes fulfilled. For Caesar, though, it wasn't enough. Nothing, it seemed, ever could be.

Caesar served his year-long term and, at its end, was awarded the province of Roman Gaul to the north of the Rubicon to govern. The boy from the Subura had what amounted to a principality, but what he really wanted was a kingdom.

Genocide in Gaul

Claiming that the frontiers of his province were under threat from marauding Gallic tribes, Caesar launched an invasion of what we now know as France. His intentions were twofold – to match Pompey's reputation as a great General, but also to become as wealthy as Crassus.

Over the next eight years, Caesar waged war across Gaul. He defeated some 300 tribes, destroyed around 800 cities, killed in the region of a million people and enslaved another million. How he achieved all of this was documented, in all its gory detail, in frontline dispatches written by Caesar himself. "I came, I saw, I conquered," he wrote in one, for the benefit of his adoring fans back in Rome. He knew how his victories would play out in the city, and was meticulous in ensuring that his version of the history he was making would paint him as an irresistible leader in the eyes of the people.

As well as an accomplished spin doctor, the Gallic Wars revealed Caesar to be a military genius, leading his troops to victory after victory. The final one came at the Battle of Alesia in 52BC. Caesar and his three legions encircled the Gallic leader Vercingetorix and his 80,000-strong army in the hilltop citadel of Alesia, near Dijon, where they lay siege. As part of the plan, Caesar surrounded the city with a series of fortifications, which suggest not only the scale of his vision but also the commitment of his men. The barricade consisted of mantraps, watchtowers, 12-foot ramparts and two 15-foot-wide, 15-foot-deep ditches. It took 15,000 of his 60,000-strong force just three weeks to construct the lot. When Caesar received news that a huge Gallic relief army was headed his way, he had another similar barricade constructed facing outwards.

It was yet another staggering gamble. With his army effectively walled in, there could be no escape. Caesar would either defeat the Gauls here and now, or die in the attempt. Once again, though, his punt paid off spectacularly. After two months of the besiegers themselves being besieged, the Gauls were beaten when they simultaneously attacked from both within the citadel and outside Caesar's barricade. They were routed, with losses possibly as high as 130,000.

War crimes

By the time Gaul fell, Caesar had surpassed his arms. He now boasted more wealth and glory than any man in Rome – Crassus and Pompey the Great included. The eight years of warfare had provided him with something else, too. They had transformed him into a worshipped leader with an army of fanatically loyal soldiers at his command. When civil war came, these elite legionnaires – the best in the Roman army – would fight for Caesar, not Rome ▶

Melchior Feselen's painting *Alesia Besieged By Julius Caesar* captures the event in breathtaking detail

PAYING TRIBUTE
ROMAN COINS FEATURED THE FACE OF JULIUS CAESAR, WHICH WOULD DOUBTLESS HAVE APPEALED TO HIS EGO.

It was yet another staggering gamble. With Caesar's army effectively walled in, there could be no escape

TIMELINE *continued*

67BC Caesar marries the second of his wives, Pompeia, granddaughter of the Roman dictator Sulla.

65BC The 35-year-old Caesar is elected to a minor role in the government of Rome. He soon begins a campaign to increase his popularity among the people and rise up through the ranks of power.

62BC Caesar's marriage to Pompeia ends in divorce.

60BC Caesar enters into a pact with Crassus and Pompey the Great, designed to reap huge benefits for all three men.

59BC He becomes Consul of Rome.

59BC Pompey marries Caesar's daughter, Julia.

55BC Caesar marries his third wife, Calpurnia Pisonis, sister of the Pontifex Lucius Calpurnius Piso.

Caesar's CIVIL WAR

In 49BC, the Senate declared Caesar an enemy of the state and called upon Pompey the Great to take up arms against him. Caesar responded by marching on Rome. Initially only able to assemble around 15,000 raw recruits, Pompey abandoned Rome to Caesar and withdrew his army to Greece.

There, Pompey began to assemble a vast force with which to retake Rome. Caesar needed to move quickly. He marched west to Spain, where several legions loyal to Pompey were garrisoned. He reached them in just 27 days, and defeated them within a couple of weeks.

Caesar now turned his armies east, and set out to take on Pompey. Gathering his troops at the heel of Italy, he prepared to sail across the Adriatic Sea to Greece. Pompey, however, had taken control of the waterway and Caesar only managed to land a force of 20,000.

The pair's initial confrontation took place at Dyrrachium in present-day Albania, where Caesar was defeated, losing more than a thousand veterans in the process. But Pompey failed to capitalise on this success, and when the two armies again locked horns on 9 August 48BC at the Battle of Pharsalus, Caesar prevailed. Despite being outnumbered two to one, he managed to outsmart his former ally. Predicting that Pompey would attempt a cavalry attack on his right-flank, Caesar concealed a large force of legionnaires there to mount an ambush. Pompey's cavalry were surprised and wiped out, causing panic throughout Pompey's ranks. The rest of his army then abandoned the field and their General fled to Egypt, where he was later assassinated.

After marching through Syria and present-day Turkey, easily defeating the local Kings still loyal to Pompey's cause, Caesar turned his attention to the last remaining threat in Carthage. He travelled around the Mediterranean, gathering his legions for the final push against General Scipio, who had significant forces there.

At Thapsus in 46BC – even though his forces were slightly outnumbered and up against the might of elephant infantry, the equivalent of tanks on the ancient battlefield – Caesar would again prove irresistible. Without orders, his trumpeters signalled the attack early. This prompted Caesar's archers to open up and his frontline to move forward. Scipio's army broke ranks immediately and began retreating, so Caesar unleashed the rest of his force, causing Scipio's elephant infantry to run amok. The entire army was routed within minutes. The war officially ended the following year and Caesar returned home to claim his prize – Rome.

Caesar proudly leads his men to another victory

58BC

Hungry for power and determined to expand the Roman Republic, Caesar leads an army of men west to begin his conquest of Gaul.

55BC

Caesar makes his first excursion to Britain. His troops land at Deal in Kent, but the campaign is cut short by bad weather.

54BC

He launches a second assault on Britain. After making some gains, he retreats to Rome for the winter.

49BC

In arguably the most pivotal act of his career, Caesar leads his troops across the Rubicon River to engage Pompey, starting a civil war that will last four years.

48BC

Pharsalus in Greece is the scene of the final showdown between Caesar and Pompey. After Pompey's army is destroyed, he flees to Egypt, but is murdered on his arrival.

46BC

Caesar takes part in his final military engagement, at the Battle of Thapsus, a brief skirmish that results in an overwhelming victory.

44BC

The Roman leader meets a grisly end at the hands of The Liberators, a group of Senators – led by Brutus – who have become disillusioned with his rule.

Caesar's RELATIONSHIP WITH CLEOPATRA

In 48BC, when Caesar arrived in Egypt in pursuit of Pompey the Great at the height of the civil war, he quickly discovered that the Pharaoh's advisers – believing it would win Caesar's favour – had murdered his rival. The opposite was true, and it hardened Caesar's feelings towards Egypt's teenage King, Ptolemy XIII, to such a degree that he made a pact with Ptolemy's older sister, Cleopatra, to get her reinstated as the co-ruler of Egypt, as agreed in her father's will. Caesar, now 52 – an old man by the standards of antiquity but still an insatiable womaniser – entered into an affair with Cleopatra, who was 30 years his junior.

The players in Ptolemy's camp were infuriated by Caesar's meddling, and besieged Caesar and Cleopatra in Alexandria until Caesar's reinforcements arrived to rescue them. Enraged, Caesar decided to lead an army against Ptolemy's forces, defeating them at the Battle of the Nile in 46BC. The 15-year-old Ptolemy was drowned in the Nile under the weight of his own armour, and Cleopatra's throne was secured.

By now pregnant with Caesar's child, the canny Cleopatra remained loyal to the older man, restoring Egyptian territories in Rhodes and Cyprus and, in the process, gaining Caesar's (and, by proxy, Rome's) patronage. She gave birth to his only son, Caesarion, within nine months of their first meeting. Their union was never recognised in Rome, however, and Caesar rejected Caesarion, because his heir after his death.

Nevertheless, after Caesarion's birth, Cleopatra brought the child to Rome, where they stayed in the palace Caesar had built in their honour. She remained by his side, an instinctive and brilliant supporter to the end. Indeed, so concerned was she about the rumours of a plot to kill him that, on 14 March 44BC – the day before Caesar's murder – she awoke from a terrible dream in which she claimed to have foreseen his assassination. She warned him to stay in the safety of the palace but, of course, Caesar declined and, within 24 hours, his bloodied corpse was lying in the curia beneath a statue of Pompey the Great, the man he'd battled against for the control of Rome.

Though she would only live for another 14 years, before dying heartbroken by her own hand aged just 39, Cleopatra remains one of history's true pioneers – not least because she succeeded as a female in the most macho of worlds.

Caesar Meeting Cleopatra, a 1747 painting by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

Getty Images

While his popularity among the people was at an all-time high, the opposition to Caesar in the Senate was growing daily. Moreover, his alliance with the Godfathers was over. Crassus was dead – killed while leading his armies to Rome's worst ever defeat, against the Parthians at the Battle of Carrhae in modern-day Turkey. Pompey the Great, meanwhile, had grown distrustful of his former ally, calling for Caesar to be relieved of his command and demanding that he return to Rome to face questions about war crimes.

Caesar the gambler refused. Instead, he led his army across the Rubicon and marched on Rome. "The die is cast," he noted as he did so.

Civil war engulfed the Mediterranean for the next four years. With its legions scattered across its Empire, Rome's military leader Pompey was forced to abandon the city and flee to Greece to regroup. Caesar took Rome without so much as a skirmish, and claimed it as his own. After first dealing with hostile legions deployed in Spain, he followed Pompey to Greece for a final showdown at Pharsalus, a hundred miles north of Athens. Here, in 48BC, Caesar outsmarted the older General and annihilated his army. Rome's great hero escaped to Egypt with Caesar in pursuit, but there was no sanctuary waiting for him there, and he was assassinated by the Pharaoh's henchmen a mere as soon as he stepped off the boat. With Pompey dead, defeating the rest of his forces proved little more than a formality for Caesar. The last confrontation came in 46BC in what we now know as Tunisia.

CAESAR THE FASCIST?

IN 1937, ORSON WELLES BROUGHT THE PLAY *JULIUS CAESAR* TO THE BROADWAY STAGE. WELLES DRESSED HIS CAST IN OUTFITS SIMILAR TO THOSE USED IN FASCIST ITALY AND NAZI GERMANY, AND APPEARED TO DRAW SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CAESAR AND MUSSOLINI.

Caesar leads his forces across the Rubicon River in 49BC

Mary Evans

***The Senate bestowed every available honour upon Caesar,* including the title of "dictator for life" – not that Caesar was satisfied**

The Battle of Thapsus, as it was known, was one of the briefest in history; it lasted only a few hours and resulted in around 30,000 casualties. Caesar's military brilliance would never be tested again.

Spontaneous gesture

Caesar returned to Rome in triumph. Now aged 54, he became the Republic's absolute ruler and promised the people a positive new era characterised by peace and stability. The Senate bestowed every available honour upon him, including the title of "dictator for life" – not that Caesar was satisfied.

The boy from the Subura wanted the one thing that Rome forbade. He wanted to be King and to kill off the Republic. The Senate, he knew, would never allow this but, with the people behind him, how could they possibly stop him? He decided to test public opinion.

The Lupercalia was a festival held every year in Ancient Rome, partly in honour of Lupa, the she-wolf, which, according to Roman myth, had suckled the infant orphans Romulus and Remus, the founders of the city. Romulus had, of course, gone on to become Rome's first King, and the fact that the festival had the city's monarchical origins at its heart is doubtless what prompted Caesar's next move.

After a speech to a wildly enthusiastic crowd during the Lupercalia of 44BC, Caesar had Mark Antony, his loyal Lieutenant, come onto the rostrum where he was standing, to offer him a crown – the ultimate symbol of kingship. It appeared to be a spontaneous gesture but was, in fact, a PR stunt. When Caesar took the crown, however, the crowd fell silent. So Caesar handed it back to Mark Antony – and the crowd cheered. When Mark Antony offered him the crown a second time, the crowd booed. Caesar, seeking to salvage the situation, refused it a second time, to rapturous applause. The crowd saw this as a demonstration of Caesar's loyalty to Republican values. His enemies, however, recognised it for what it was.

Caesar's opponents knew that he had to be stopped, but how? Assassination, they decreed, was the only option. A core group in the Senate, many of them veterans of Pompey's armies, began to conspire. They codenamed their group The Liberators, and began to see it as their destiny to rid Rome of this upstart ▶

Caesar is offered the crown by Mark Antony but refuses it, knowing that public opinion is against the idea

Mary Evans

Caesar succumbs to a pack of murderous Senators, known as The Liberators

Getty Images

from the Subura – to a man, they all came from Rome's richest families.

The leader of The Liberators was Brutus. His relationship with Caesar was deeply complex. Caesar considered Brutus a friend, but Brutus held Caesar in contempt. He had fought against Caesar in the civil war but, along with many of his co-conspirators, had been given clemency by Caesar when it ended. It was that same whiff of generosity that Caesar had displayed when dealing with the pirates as a younger man. This time, though, that kindness would cost him his life. Brutus and his allies were Roman warriors, and their code was simple – death or glory. By beating them, then pardoning them, Caesar had robbed them not only of their power but also of their honour. There was also the weight of history. Brutus was descended from the original Brutus, who had rid Rome of its last King, Tarquin, in 509BC. History, it seemed, was repeating itself, and Brutus felt he had a pre-ordained role to play.

But he and his co-conspirators would need to act quickly. Caesar announced that he was to leave Rome for three years to lead a military campaign abroad. Before he went, though, he would visit the Senate on the 15th of the month – the Ides of March – one last time. That's when the conspirators agreed they would strike. Despite reports of a plot against him, Caesar refused to believe that he was in any real danger. On 15 March 44BC, he travelled through Rome without a bodyguard, to the curia at the great theatre Pompey had built for the city ten years earlier, to meet with the Senate. The Liberators had chosen this place for the assassination deliberately. It was a very public space, and they wanted to wake Rome up from its trance. Here, they waited nervously, their sharpened daggers hidden within their robes.

GLOBAL ICON
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S 1599 PLAY *JULIUS CAESAR* IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST PRODUCTION PERFORMED AT THE FAMOUS GLOBE THEATRE IN LONDON.

Frenzied attack

When Caesar entered the chamber alone, furtive glances were exchanged and the death sentence was silently passed. Caesar sat upon his throne and listened as one Senator begged him to allow his exiled brother to return home. The denial of the request had been predicted by all of the assassins, who had also agreed that the refusal would trigger the killing. As soon as Caesar said no, the pack descended upon him. The attack was so frenzied that the group were said to have accidentally wounded one another in their eagerness to drive their blades in. Caesar was stabbed 23 times. As Brutus finished him off, he told him, "This is what happens to tyrants."

But the assassins had misjudged the mood of Rome. To the people, Caesar was no tyrant; he was their beloved leader. Upon learning of his death, they burned the houses of the so-called Liberators and chased them from the city. The killing caused another civil war that ended with Caesar's son Octavian being crowned Emperor, ending the Republic and ushering in an imperial system and a dynasty that lasted 400 years.

Julius Caesar may have never been crowned King of the Romans, but in death he was commemorated as a deity. His statue was erected in the Parthenon, a building dedicated to the gods. The only other human to receive that honour was Romulus, who had founded Rome 700 years before.

When Caesar entered the chamber alone, furtive glances were exchanged **and the death sentence was silently passed**

Caesar's death provoked feelings of anger and resentment among the people of Rome

Mary Evans

Caesar's CULTURAL LEGACY

More than 2,000 years after his death, Julius Caesar is still a household name – and the subject of numerous TV programmes, films and stage plays. His enduring appeal stems not only from the staggering achievements of his lifetime – here, after all, was a leader who left a blood-stained mark on the pages of history as diabolical as Genghis Khan or Adolf Hitler – but also from his intoxicating and overpowering personality. He had the ability to lead, inspire and enchant those who followed him, so it makes sense that his tumultuous life has been, and continues to be, explored in the arts.

Most famously, Caesar is celebrated in Shakespeare's 1599 work *The Tragedy Of Julius Caesar*, which specifically explores the power struggle that took place at the end of his dominance, and his murder at the hands of Brutus' men. It's been performed countless times down the centuries, and has perhaps set the blueprint for portrayals of Rome's greatest son ever since. In it, he is depicted as ambitious, vain and stubborn. A man with an unbreakable belief in his own abilities, and place in eternity. This confidence is, of course, his downfall. Believing his own hype, he mistakenly presumes that his immortal image will save his mortal self. That said, by the play's end – as in life – Caesar's influence reaches beyond the grave to bring about the demise of the Republic and the birth of the monarchy when Octavius is crowned Emperor.

His other great depiction is in George Bernard Shaw's 1898 play *Caesar And Cleopatra*. Here, he is portrayed as universal man – wiser than those around him and unafraid to accept new cultures, loves or experiences – while his fellow Romans are painted as cowardly and boyish.

These two landmark works have arguably had more influence on representations of Caesar than any other in the modern era, both of them highlighting the complexities and contradictions of this extraordinary man. His character has inspired hundreds of films over the years and has been adapted for everything from blaxploitation flicks and gangster movies to comedies. The earliest film about him dates back to 1909, and since then he's been played by everyone from Kenneth Williams to John Gielgud. In the digital age, too, his name endures and he can be found populating big video-game franchises such as *Civilization Revolution*, *Fallout* and *Assassin's Creed*. The name Julius Caesar, as he probably pointed out, will live forever.

AFTER D-DAY BLOODBATH IN THE BOCAGE

Second World War: For all the heroics of D-Day, there was still a long way to go before the Allies' overall objective was met. As Bernard Montgomery's forces battled their way across Normandy in an attempt to retake occupied towns and cities, they were met with fierce opposition. And nowhere was this more deadly than in the unforgiving *bocage* region...

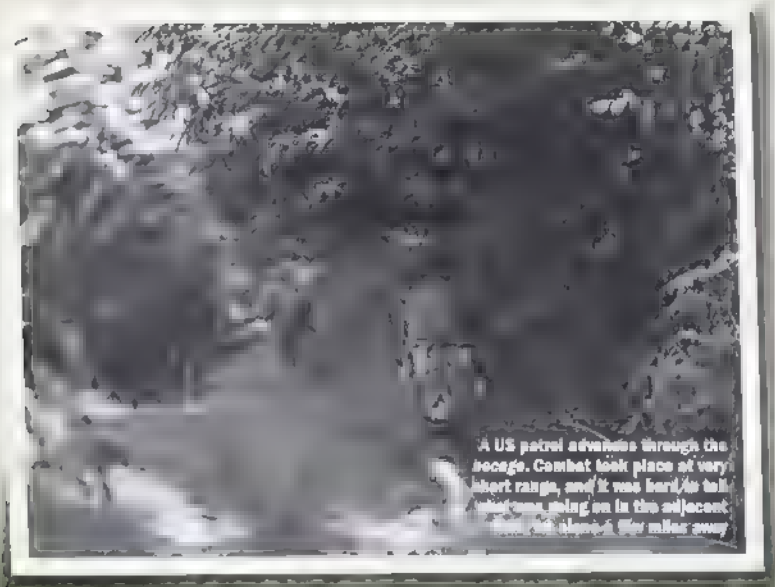
ALLIED PLANNERS HAD spent so much time solving the problems of getting troops ashore on D-Day that virtually no attention had been paid to the problems they might encounter once they were off the beaches. The soldiers had trained in large armoured formations on Salisbury Plain, Dartmoor, Exmoor and the North York Moors, preparing for the type of mobile warfare that had characterised operations in North Africa. On the extreme left of the beachhead, 6th Airborne had established a small bridgehead across the Orne, overlooking country not unlike that of Salisbury Plain. However, the bridgehead was considered too small to allow armoured divisions to concentrate there in any strength, and certainly not in secret. To the immediate west, the situation was even worse. Here, the British 3rd Division faced the industrial suburbs of Caen, which the Germans were defending. All armies disliked attacking into cities, because it was bloody and took time. To the west of Caen, the country was open – but too open. Here, Caprequet airfield extended east to west across any advance to the south the Canadian 3rd Division might make, and the Germans were busily defending the southern side of the runway. Further west, the British on Gold Beach, and the Americans on Omaha and Utah, faced very different problems

Massive force

From Caprequet, and extending to the marshes of the Cotentin Peninsula, lay the *bocage*, a patchwork of sunken lanes and fields bounded by ancient hedgerows that rose to a height of 15 feet. Farmhouses studded the land, their thick-walled buildings relics of the time, five centuries earlier, when Normandy had been a battleground during the Hundred Years War. Ten miles inland, the country rose to a tangle of hills that the Normans called "Normandie Suisse" because of its resemblance to the Alpine foothills. In short, the Normandy countryside was an attacker's nightmare and a defender's paradise; a network of natural and man-made obstacles

Erwin Rommel knew that if the beachhead was to be destroyed, it must be attacked quickly and with massive force. He ordered the 21st Panzer and 12th SS Panzer Divisions to strike a coordinated blow, but both were already fighting piecemeal with the Allies and could not disengage. By dawn

BACKSTORY
With the war in its fifth year, the Allies had taken the initiative, invading France en masse with the intention of driving out the German occupiers and, ultimately, forcing a surrender by the Axis forces.



A US patrol advances through the bocage. Combat took place at very short range, and it was hard to tell what was going on in the adjacent [illegible] a few miles away

THE NORMANDY COUNTRYSIDE WAS SEEN AS AN ATTACKER'S NIGHTMARE AND A DEFENDER'S PARADISE

on 7 June, elements of 21st Panzer were supporting the attacks of the 15th Army's 346th and 711th Divisions against the paratrooper and commando bridgehead east of the Orne. Their counter-attacks recaptured some ground but were broken off when the guns of the Royal Navy pulverised advanced units, while the 51st Highland Division moved across the Orne to support the airborne and the commandos. In the centre, the advance guard of the 12th SS Panzer Division was already counter-attacking the Canadians north of Capriquet, a battle group succeeding in cutting off the Regina Rifles in Bretteville. Because speed was now essential, Panzer Lehr was trying to advance on the left of the 12th SS against the British 50th Division, but it was attacked constantly from the air. Its commander, Fritz Bayerlein, who had served as Chief of Staff to Rommel in North Africa, described the air attacks as the worst he had experienced. The move cost Panzer Lehr 80 of its half-track trucks, self-propelled guns and prime-movers.

THIS IS FOR YOU, MONTY
THE NORMANDY COMMUNE OF COLLEVILLE-SUR-ORNE WAS RENAMED COLLEVILLE-MONTGOMERY IN JUNE 1946, IN HONOUR OF THE MAN WHO HAD LED THE ALLIED LIBERATION OF THE REGION TWO YEARS EARLIER.

Brutal tactics

The Resistance also played a vital role in preventing the movement of German forces to Normandy. Had one formation – the 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich" – got to Normandy in the first few days after the invasion, the course of the battle might have been different. Das Reich was one of the most formidable formations in Europe: 20,000 superbly trained, battle-hardened troops with 240 tanks and self-propelled guns, including 100 Tigers and Panthers. But on D-Day, it was still at Montauban, 400 miles from the beachhead.

On the evening of 6 June, the officer commanding, Heinz Lammerding, received orders to move to Normandy. Under normal conditions, the move would have been completed by 9 June. However, by that date, advance units had only just reached Limoges, 200 miles south of Normandy. The rest of the division was strung out over 180 miles of the winding RN 20, back to Montauban. Everything had gone wrong for, although the division had been in a high state of alert, on 7 June the Resistance had blown up much of its fuel reserves and some of its transport. Panzer grenadiers hastily requisitioned all the fuel and civilian vehicles they could lay their hands on. But during the next 48 hours, the Resistance ambushed the advance guard on a bridge before Souillac, where RN 20 crossed the Dordogne, and hit the long flanks of the stalled column in a dozen other places.

THEY HERDED THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN, THREW IN SOME HIGH EXPLOSIVES, THEN GUNNED DOWN THE SURVIVORS

The SS, frustrated by the casualties caused by hidden enemies who quickly melted into the countryside, retaliated with the same brutal tactics they had used to quell partisan activity on the Eastern Front. On 9 June, Lammerding led a panzer grenadier battalion into the town of Tulle, 50 miles south of Limoges, and caught the citizens in the middle of celebrating their liberation. The SS troops publicly hanged 99 men, women and children from balconies along the main street, and forced their families to watch. The following day, the advance guard surrounded then occupied the village of Oradour-sur-Glane, north-west of Limoges. The SS separated the men from the women and children,

and machine-gunned them. They herded the women and children into the church, threw in a satchel of high explosives, then gunned down the survivors as they sought to escape the flames. In all, 642 died – 190 men, 245 women and 207 children.

The advance guard pushed north. When it reached the Loire on 11 June, the Germans found that only a single-track bridge had survived sabotage or air attacks. The division following up behind, constantly harassed by Resistance attacks, jammed itself into a bottleneck, a sitting target for air strikes. Meanwhile, on 14 June, advance elements reached the division's assembly area at Domfront, 50 miles south of the beachheads. It was now that "cab ranks" of rocket-firing Typhoons, directed in by the SOE, hit Das Reich, destroying 16 vehicles in the first attack. The full division finally limped into Normandy on 23 June, too late to influence the battles for the beachhead.

Daring plan

Bernard Montgomery had come ashore on 8 June, and had found his HQ caravans in the grounds of a château near Creully. Visited by Winston Churchill, Alan Brooke and Jan Smuts two days later, he outlined his plan for the land battle. After initial setbacks, the momentum of the US build-up was increasing, and Monty believed it imperative that US forces strike west to take the Cotentin Peninsula and capture the port of Cherbourg. He therefore intended to attract as many of the German forces as he could to the British sector, where intelligence indicated that there was a good chance of success. It was clear that the Germans were experiencing difficulties moving reserves to Normandy and in coordinating their counter-attacks, and that a gap had opened up in the area of Villers-Bocage south-west of Caen, between 12 SS Panzer and Panzer Lehr. While 51st Highland Division attacked south along the eastern side of Caen, the newly landed 7th Armoured Division – the "Desert Rats" – was to strike directly south through Villers-Bocage and then, moving east, link up with 51st Highland Division and encircle Caen.

▲ MIGHTY MUSTANG
Wearing its invasion stripes – the black and white bars that signified its allegiance to the Allied cause – Mustangs like this were responsible for maintaining air superiority over the beachhead and beyond, protecting the bombers that were attacking rear areas.

ROMMEL RUBBED OUT
ERWIN ROMMEL DIED JUST A FEW MONTHS AFTER THE D-DAY LANDINGS. IN OCTOBER 1944, HE WAS SUSPECTED OF BEING INVOLVED IN A BOMB ATTACK ON ADOLF HITLER'S WOLF'S LAIR HQ THREE MONTHS EARLIER, AND "ENCOURAGED" TO TAKE A CYANIDE PILL.

This was a daring plan and required daring men to carry it out. Unfortunately, further down the chain of command were officers who could not think beyond set piece battles, and other officers who had seen too much action in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, and who were tired. On 12 June, Miles Dempsey, commander of British Second Army and Montgomery's direct subordinate, visited the HQ of Gerard Bucknall, the commander of XXX Corps, of which 7th Armoured Division was a part, and was horrified to discover that no preparations for the attack had yet been made. When 7th Armoured's tanks did roll south on 13 June, the divisional commander, George Erskine, regretted that the order had not been received a day earlier, as he was sure that the Germans would now be filling the gap. As speed was of the essence, Erskine selected Robert Hinde's 22nd Armoured Brigade to spearhead the drive. Hinde, whose often reckless bravery in North Africa had earned him the nickname "Looney", stormed into Villers-Bocage at 8am on 13 June, then ordered 4th County of London Yeomanry and a company of the Rifle Brigade about a mile north-east along the road to Caen, to a hill marked as Point 213 on Allied maps. The Yeomanry's commander, Viscount Arthur Cranley, pointed out to Hinde that the road was narrow with deep ditches on either side, and was bordered by hedgerows. He wanted to spend some time on reconnaissance, but Hinde told him to get on with it. At 11am, the British were on the hill, from where they could see the chimneys of Colombelles, the industrial suburb of Caen. And a few hundred metres to the south of Point 213, Michael Wittmann, the veteran of many tank battles on the Eastern Front, could see through the vision slit of his heavily camouflaged Tiger tank the turrets of British tanks above the hedgerows, stretching along the road like ducks in a shooting gallery.

Wittmann commanded No 2 Company, 101st Heavy Panzer Battalion, which had arrived outside Villers-Bocage during the night, but for the moment he was by himself. Speeding down a farm track that ran parallel to the road, he fired and hit a Bren gun-carrier, which slewed across the road, belching clouds of black smoke. The Tiger roared in towards Villers-Bocage, Wittmann pumping another 22 rounds at the British column, each round demolishing a tank or lighter armoured vehicle, while British shells bounced off the German's armour. Entering the town, Wittmann knocked out Viscount Cranley's tank, then the tanks of the second-in-command and ▶

KEY FIGURES

BERNARD MONTGOMERY
The man in overall charge of ground operations during the Normandy campaign. Montgomery was criticised – notably by Prime Minister Winston Churchill – for his initial inability to capture the city of Caen. Monty was defended from dismissal by his superior, Alan Brooke.

ERWIN ROMMEL
The "Desert Fox" was the German commander in charge of defending the Atlantic Wall. Broadsided by the D-Day invasion, he managed to revitalise his forces to stage a stern fightback. Rommel was wounded during an aerial bombing raid on 17 July.

OMAR BRADLEY
As the most senior commander of US ground forces during the Normandy campaign, Bradley was integral to the liberation of Cherbourg and, later, the capture of Saint-Lô. For his efforts, he was promoted to the role of General in March 1945.

ALAN BROOKE
Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Brooke was the foremost military adviser to Winston Churchill. A considerate man, he stepped up to defend Montgomery when the impatient Prime Minister criticised Monty for his slow progress.

GEORGE ERSKINE
As the man in charge of 7th Armoured, Erskine was faced with the challenge of overcoming the German defences in the difficult bocage region. When the division struggled to meet its objectives, Erskine was removed from his position and reassigned.

GUNTHER VON KLUGE
Following the dismissal of Gerd von Rundstedt by Adolf Hitler, von Kluge was made Commander-in-Chief of German forces on the Western Front. After Erwin Rommel was wounded in an aerial attack, von Kluge took over the command of Army Group B as well. ▶

the regimental Sergeant Major. Reaching the town square, Wittmann was hit by a storm of British anti-tank fire, and pulled back, destroying yet another British tank in the process. After re-arming and re-fuelling, and joining up with four other Tigers and an up-gunned Mark VI, he returned to Point 213 to complete the massacre of the County of London Yeomanry. Then, reinforced by some tanks from 2nd Panzer Division, he again attacked into Villers-Bocage. This time, the British were ready and the Mark IV and three Tigers – including Wittmann's – were knocked out by a combination of six- and 17-pounder anti-tank guns, though Wittmann and most of the crews escaped on foot.

With 2nd Panzer Division arriving in strength during the evening and throughout the following day, Bucknall ordered 7th Division to abandon Villers-Bocage and withdraw under cover of a heavy US artillery barrage during the night/early morning of 14/15 June. In total, for the loss of four tanks, the Germans had destroyed 53 British tanks and other vehicles. The debacle of Villers-Bocage effectively ended Montgomery's first attempt to break out to the west of Caen. It also demoralised 7th Armoured Division and spread alarm throughout the Allied armies.

But although Villers-Bocage was a victory for the Germans, it was only of tactical importance because this action, and all the interdiction operations of the Allied air forces and the French Resistance, had bought several vital days in which to establish the beachhead. In the months preceding the landing, literally millions of man-hours had been devoted to working out complex landing procedures for men and materiel. These plans did not survive the first few minutes on the Normandy beaches: all was chaos. Logistics troops on the beaches formed ad hoc teams and kept the materiel moving to improvised depots. By the end of the first day, 8,900 vehicles and 1,900 tons of stores had been landed on the British forces' beaches alone. The work was complicated by German batteries at Le Havre, which kept pumping shells onto Sword Beach. However, the biggest blow came not from German gunners but from RAF Bomber Command – on 7 June, a Lancaster bomb-aimer misjudged his target and dropped a stick of bombs onto the main British ordnance depot just off the beach. The result was spectacular, as 26,000 litres of fuel and 400 tons of ammunition exploded

Above: Tiger tanks of Michael Wittmann's unit, the schwere SS-Panzer Abteilung 101, move up to the front near the village of Morgny. Right: a British Cromwell tank, seen after a fatal encounter with a Tiger

Mass of wreckage

Logistics planners had known that landing men and supplies on open beaches would be a dangerous business, and would not produce the military muscle needed to secure the beachhead, let alone allow a breakout. The success of the Normandy landings depended on getting the Mulberry harbours into position as quickly as possible. The first of the 600 caissons and blockships was deposited off Arromanches in the British sector, and off Omaha in the US sector, on 7 June. Eleven days later, the American harbour received its first cargo and by 18 June, 24,412 tons of supplies and ammunition had rolled ashore.

Around midnight on 18 June, the wind shifted to the north-east, and by dawn it had risen to gale force, turning the Bay of the Seine into a seething cauldron. Commanding a convoy of tugs towing 22 caissons in mid-Channel was Maxwell Taylor. Never before in a long career at sea had he experienced a storm of such unexpected violence: "It arrived from nowhere, whispering across the water at first, and finally rising to a triumphant shout of malignancy calling from the seas an answering mood. It caught the unseaworthy tows unprotected and struck them spitefully until, of the 22 whale tows that sailed from the Solent in fine weather, not one remained afloat."

The full force of the gale hit Omaha beach. Taylor continued: "Breaches appeared in the breakwater. Blockships broke their backs and Phoenix caissons disintegrated. Through the breaks, the storm struck at the roadways and the piers so that soon they were sinking. Then, onto the half submerged roadways, drifting landing craft and equipment piled themselves, till a jumbled mass of wreckage was torn from the moorings and cast upon the beaches. Along the edge of the sea, a long length of whole roadway and wrecked craft trailed brokenly. The destruction was complete."

Opposite one of the Omaha exits, an engineer officer recorded 35 LCMs, 11 LCTs, nine Rhino ferries, three LCIs and more than 20 other craft piled up. Mulberry B, at first sight, seemed in no better condition. Taylor recalled that along the beach at Arromanches "littered wreckage was piled high, casting itself near the high-water mark in a chaotic tangle of steel". But, despite appearances to the contrary, Mulberry B proved salvable, the full impact of the storm having been broken

The manmade Mulberry harbours were vital to the Allied war effort, although their efficacy was severely dented following the Great Storm, which destroyed one and left the other requiring major repair work

1944 TIMELINE

6 JUNE
More than 150,000 Allied troops land on the shores of Normandy, with the intention of liberating France from German occupation.

9 JUNE
Bernard Montgomery meets with Miles Dempsey and Omar Bradley to thrash out a plan to take the city of Caen. The men agree on a pincer movement, codenamed Operation Wild Oats.

9 JUNE
Having lost up to 200 vehicles in air attacks during its 90-mile drive from Chartres, the powerful Panzer Lehr division of the German Army finally arrives in the Tilly-sur-Seulles area to defend against XXX Corps.

11 JUNE
7th Armoured Division moves into Tilly-sur-Seulles. However, the Panzer Lehr counter-attacks, forcing a withdrawal. Further assaults on the town by 50th Northumbrian get bogged down in the *bocage*.

13 JUNE
The 7th Armoured's advance into Villers-Bocage is thwarted by German tank ace Michael Wittmann's Heavy Panzer Battalion 101. Fifty-three of its armoured vehicles are destroyed.

14 JUNE
Montgomery abandons the idea of a pincer attack on Caen. Meanwhile, the town of Carentan is liberated by Allied troops.

17 JUNE
Adolf Hitler visits France, where he is informed by Erwin Rommel and Gerd von Rundstedt that the Allied forces cannot be driven out of the country.

The American flag flies defiantly over Utah Beach as eagerly awaited support infantry and equipment come ashore

by the Calvados reef lying beyond the harbour. The remnants of the American Mulberry were towed east to repair the British harbour, and by the end of the month it was receiving some 4,000 tons of supplies each day. Far more materiel, however, continued to be landed on open beaches. The problem that logisticians faced after the storm was not one of getting supplies ashore, but of finding somewhere to store them in a beachhead

The storm had not been fatal to the logistic effort, but it did re-emphasise the need to capture a port. This was the task of Joe Lawton Collins' VII Corps, which had come ashore on Utah – but first, the American beachheads had to be joined up. The terrain behind both beaches was difficult and favoured the defender. Troops trying to move off Omaha came over the bluffs and were confronted by the flooded Aure Valley. It took elements of the US 26th Regiment – part of 1st Division – until the morning of 8 June to take the small village of Formigny, only about a mile behind the Vierville beachhead, and it took the 116th Regiment, reinforced by the Rangers, until 9 June to relieve James Earl Rudder's men isolated on the tip of Pointe du Hoc. To the south-west, units of the 29th Division, the 175th Infantry and 747th Tank Battalion had advanced slowly behind a barrage of naval gunfire, and entered the blazing ruins of Isigny at about the same time

Grenades and bayonets

Across on the Cotentin Peninsula, the 101st Airborne advanced south of its drop zone towards the town of Carentan, on the Cherbourg-Caen railway line, which had to be taken so that the American beachheads could be linked up. On 9 June, Robert Sink, commander of the 506th Paratrooper Battalion of the 101st Airborne, led a patrol through the swamps that lay behind the beaches, until he reached the causeway rising six nine feet above the surrounding country, which led south-west to Carentan across the Douve River. Advancing across the causeway, the paratroopers quickly came under fire, but Sink's report of the contact was misinterpreted by his divisional HQ, which concluded that the causeway was only lightly defended. The 101st's commander, Maxwell Taylor, ordered the 502nd Parachute Battalion to attack over the causeway, but the soldiers discovered that they could only advance in single file, moving at a crouch, or even crawling, and it took them three hours to advance less than half a mile across a series of bridges that spanned the Douve and its several branches. The advance was brought to a complete halt by fire from a large stone farmhouse to the west of the causeway, on a hillock that rose sharply from the marshes. After artillery fire had failed to knock out the position, the 502nd's commander, Robert G Cole, ordered his battalion to charge the farm. Cole and his second-in-command, John P Stopka, splashed off through the swamp towards the Germans, followed at first by only about 60 of the battalion. Inspired by the example of their officers, or shamed by their own reluctance, more and more men joined the charge until the enemy positions were overrun, and the Germans were killed with grenades and bayonets

As the 502nd and other units closed on the town, Carentan's commander, Friedrich von der Heydte, was urging the immediate despatch of reinforcements, but Allied airpower and the French Resistance prevented their arrival. The only assistance he got came on the night/early morning of 11/12 June, when transport aircraft managed to drop 18 tons of infantry ammunition and 88mm shells inside the town. German logistic troops had barely begun distributing it when concentrations of naval gunfire, artillery, mortars and tank destroyers smashed into Carentan, setting many buildings ablaze. At 2am on 12 June, the 506th Paratrooper Battalion, which had relieved the 502nd, began to attack into the north-east of Carentan. At the same time, the 327th Glider Infantry Battalion attacked from the north-west, and at 7.30am on 12 June, elements of the two units met in the centre of the town.

Meanwhile, American attacks to the north of the Utah bridgehead had run into heavy opposition and ground to a halt. More serious was the situation to the immediate west, where a bridgehead established over the Meredet River at Le Motey on 8 June was almost lost when part of the 507th Battalion panicked and fled during a German counter-attack. US VII Corps commander Collins pushed 90th Division across the Merderet, ordering divisional commander Jay W MacKelvie to strike for the western coast of the Cotentin Peninsula. Early on 10 June, the leading unit, the 2nd Battalion of the 357th ▶

WINGS OF WAR
THE ROYAL AIR FORCE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LIBERATION OF CAEN, PROVIDING MORE THAN 1,250 AIRCRAFT. THESE OPERATED FROM BASES IN BOTH NORMANDY AND BRITAIN

THE RESULT WAS SPECTACULAR: 26,000 LITRES OF FUEL AND 400 TONS OF AMMUNITION EXPLODED

18 JUNE
After changing hands 23 times, British infantry once again enter Tilly-sur-Seulles, this time liberating the town once and for all.

26 JUNE
British forces launch Operation Epsom, a campaign to establish a bridgehead on the River Odon, west of Caen. The plan fails.

28 JUNE
Friedrich Dollmann, commander of the German 7th Army, commits suicide after the Allies gain the upper hand in the Battle of Cherbourg.

30 JUNE
Following a gruelling campaign in which 23,000 Allied troops are declared dead, wounded or missing, the port city of Cherbourg is officially retaken.

2 JULY
Von Rundstedt is replaced as Commander-in-Chief of German forces on the Western Front by Gunther von Kluge.

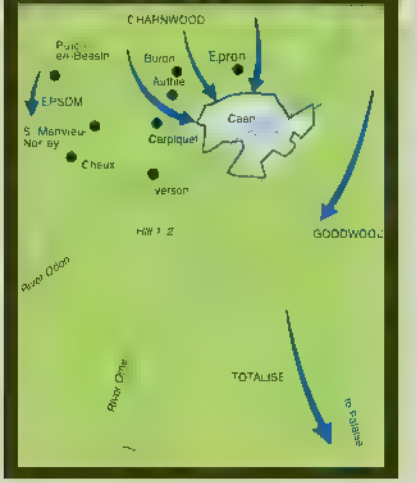
9 JULY
Following a short but devastating bombing campaign by the Allies, Caen is liberated, one month later than planned.

18 JULY
US troops under Omar Bradley finally secure what's left of the town of Saint-Lô. They have suffered some 5,000 casualties in getting there.

CAEN CONQUEST

Walking around the pretty but fairly non-descript city of Caen today, it's hard to believe that it was once the scene of such devastation. Occupied by the Germans when the Allies invaded Normandy in June 1944, its strategic significance marked it out as a primary target for conquest – a campaign that would be known as Operation Charnwood.

For one thing, it sat astride the Orne River and Caen Canal: these were valuable transport routes and their capture would significantly hinder the German war effort. Secondly, the area around the city was relatively open, making it a potential site for airfield construction. The Allies launched their aerial assault on Caen on 7 July, to facilitate an Anglo-Canadian march on the city. In all, around 2,500 tons of bombs were dropped, destroying much of the old city and unwittingly killing thousands of civilians. Many more took refuge in the Abbaye aux Hommes, which had been commissioned by William the Conqueror. Following the war, the city underwent a rebuilding programme, which was finally completed in 1982.



HIDDEN TREASURE
IN 2012, MILES DEMPSEY'S PERSONAL COPY OF THE BOOK *AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPERATIONS OF SECOND ARMY IN EUROPE 1944 45* WAS FOUND IN A SAFE. IT LATER SOLD AT AUCTION FOR £8,750.

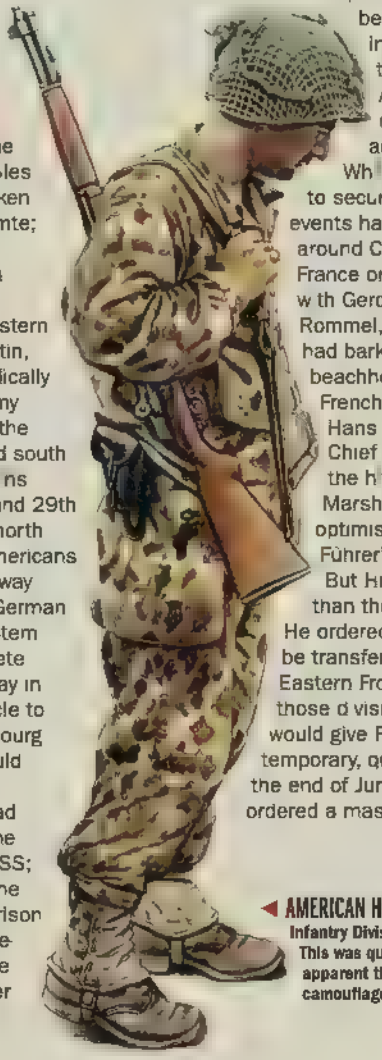
Infantry Regiment, attempted to advance behind a creeping artillery barrage, but quickly lost cohesion in the maze of hedges and small fields, and went to ground, having gained only a few hundred metres. The 1st Battalion moved up in the afternoon to relieve the 2nd, but it, too, could make no progress. The 90th Division tried again the following day and managed a snail's pace Creeping behind immense barrages, by 13 June it had reached the town of Pont l'Abbé, two miles west of the start line. The town had been levelled – an American officer claimed that only two rabbits had been found alive.

Twisted mass of metal

Now alarmed by the lack of progress, on the same day, Collins sacked Macke vie and two of his regimental commanders, and, while leaving the 90th in line, decided to reorganise his attack scheme completely. Collins had first seen action in January 1943 on the jungle-clad island of Guadalcanal, where he had led the 25th Division against the Japanese He was now realising that the Cotentin Peninsula had more in common with the islands of the south-west Pacific than with Dartmoor and Exmoor, the areas on which the Americans had trained in England. Fighting through the hedgerows required many more infantry than he had hitherto allowed, so Collins assigned both the 9th Division and the redoubtable 82nd Airborne to 90th Division's axis of advance The effect was immediate. By 16 June, 82nd Airborne had pushed five miles to the west and taken St Sauveur-le-Vicomte; two days later, the 9th Division was in Barneville-sur-Mer overlooking the western coast of the Cotentin, its artillery methodically destroying an enemy column caught on the road as it retreated south

Regrouping, Collins sent the 4th, 9th and 29th Infantry Divisions north By 20 June, the Americans were fighting their way through the main German defence line, a system of steel and concrete fortifications that lay in a six-mile semi-circle to the south of Cherbourg Collins' troops would probably not have succeeded here had they been facing the Wehrmacht or the SS; however, most of the 25,000-strong garrison consisted of middle-aged administrative personnel, and over a fifth were units formed from Polish and Russian prisoners. On 21 June, Collins requested "air pulverisation" of some 20 square miles on the outskirts of Cherbourg to demoralise the Germans and force a surrender. At 12.40pm the following day, hundreds of fighter bombers dive-bombed and strafed from as low as 300 feet. The Luftwaffe was nowhere to be seen, though 24 fighters were brought down by German anti-aircraft guns. No sooner had the fighters wheeled away than wave upon wave of heavy bombers droned overhead, depositing 1,100 tons of bombs on Cherbourg's outer defences. Within 24 hours, the three US divisions had penetrated the defence line in many places, and on 25 June the Americans received additional fire support from three battleships, four cruisers and several destroyers. American fire was so heavy that Cherbourg's commander, Karl Wilhelm von Schlieben, was driven to shelter in a deep bunker, and lost control of his forces. On the afternoon of 26 June, with Americans fighting in Cherbourg's suburbs, von Schlieben surrendered. German engineers had already reduced the port to a shambles: sunken ships blocked the harbour, toppled cranes lay in a twisted mass of metal, and mines lay everywhere It took another eight weeks to clear the wreckage, and until November before the port was brought back into full operation. The Germans had been customarily efficient; indeed, so thorough was the devastation that the Americans had to rely on supplies brought across open beaches.

While the Americans fought to secure Cherbourg, dramatic events had been taking place around Caen. Hitler had flown to France on 17 June for a conference with Gerd von Rundstedt and Rommel, during which the Führer had barked, "Don't call it a beachhead, but the last piece of French soil held by the enemy!" Hans Speidel, Rommel's Chief of Staff, recorded that the hitherto-despondent Field Marshal had begun to feel optimistic and commented on the Führer's "uncanny magnetism". But Hitler was offering more than the force of his personality. He ordered two crack divisions to be transferred to Normandy from the Eastern Front. These, combined with those divisions already in Normandy, would give Rommel a significant, if temporary, qualitative superiority by the end of June. On 20 June, Hitler ordered a massive six-division strike



AMERICAN HERO A soldier of the US 1st Infantry Division in a mottled camouflage suit. This was quickly changed when it became apparent that it conflicted with similar camouflage clothing worn by the Waffen-SS.

towards Bayeux for 1 July; this would split the beachhead and enable his forces to defeat the British and Americans in detail.

At the same time as the Führer was concocting his plans, Montgomery was preparing for another attempt to envelop Caen, this time from much closer to the city. Instead of trying to infiltrate an armoured division through the *bocage*, Monty intended to launch the three divisions of VIII Corps in "an all-out blitz attack" on 25 June – Derby Day (hence the codename for the offensive, Operation Epsom). On 22 June, Montgomery summoned all the corps and divisional commanders in Second Army to a conference at his tactical HQ at Creully, and outlined his plans. "We have now reached the 'showdown' stage," he proclaimed. "The first rush, inland to secure a good lodgement area, is over. The enemy is 'firming up' and trying to hem us in ... We have thus reached a stage where carefully prepared operations are essential. We must have no setbacks. What we take we must hold... The whole army front must flare up and the enemy must be fought to a standstill."

The attack had two phases. At 4.15am on 25 June, the leading battalions of the 49th (West Riding) Division advanced through a thick mist towards the villages of Fontenay and Rauray, to secure a start line for the second and main phase of the operation. The mist was so thick that it not only provided cover, but also served to break up the cohesion of the attacking units. By mid-morning, the mist had cleared and German fire coming from the *bocage* to the south-west of Fontenay stopped 49th Division.

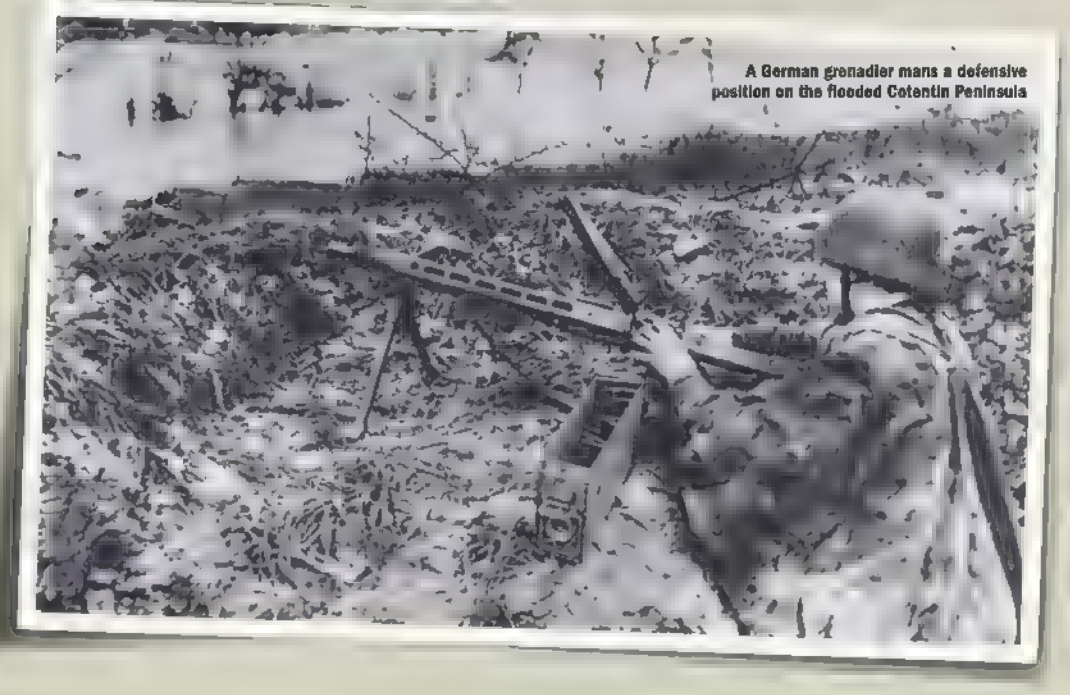
At dawn on 26 June, a tremendous barrage of more than 700 artillery pieces supplemented by naval guns – the largest concentration yet employed in Normandy – heralded the opening of the second phase. The 15th (Scottish), 43rd (Wessex) and 11th Armoured Divisions – a total of 60,000 men and 600 tanks – advanced on a narrow, two-mile front east of Fontenay down the main street of the village of Cheux. This descended steeply into a deep gully, at the bottom of which was a small stone bridge over the River Odon. Once across, VIII Corps was to swing south-east of Caen and link up with the 51st Highland Division, which would be advancing from the eastern side of Caen. VIII Corps' leading division, the 15th Scottish, attacked into Cheux and found themselves in a carefully prepared killing zone. Engineers of the Hitlerjugend had mined the streets and booby-trapped every house. The Scots had to clear Cheux by close-quarters fighting house to house, during which the leading battalion, the 2nd Glasgow Highlanders, lost more than 200 men.

Early in the afternoon, the reconnaissance unit of 11th Armoured Division, the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, struggled through the streets of Cheux and reached the gully of the Odon, where they were attacked by Hitlerjugend with Panzerfäuste and anti-tank grenades. A mile to the east, the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders also fought their way down to the Odon and seized the bridge at the hamlet of Tourmauville, over which the tanks of the 23rd Hussars passed in single file. During the next 48 hours, the Hussars pushed south up an 800-foot eminence dominating the south-western approach to Caen, which appeared on Allied maps as Hill 112. The Germans had been relying on their dual-purpose 88mm guns to hold the British tanks at bay, but attacks by Allied fighter-bombers cleared the way for the Hussars. One German survivor of the first battle of Hill 112 recalled, "In the early afternoon came the end. About a dozen tanks were rolling towards us, when two formations of twin-engined Lightnings attacked. Where to fire first? At the planes or at the tanks? In the confusion of air attack, the tanks opened fire at us. Gun after gun was knocked out, and the crews with them. Only one thing to do – withdraw!"

▲ THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

A paratrooper of the US 101st Airborne Division in typical combat dress. The screaming eagle on the division's insignia is Old Abe, the mascot of a regiment of the Iron Brigade during the American Civil War.

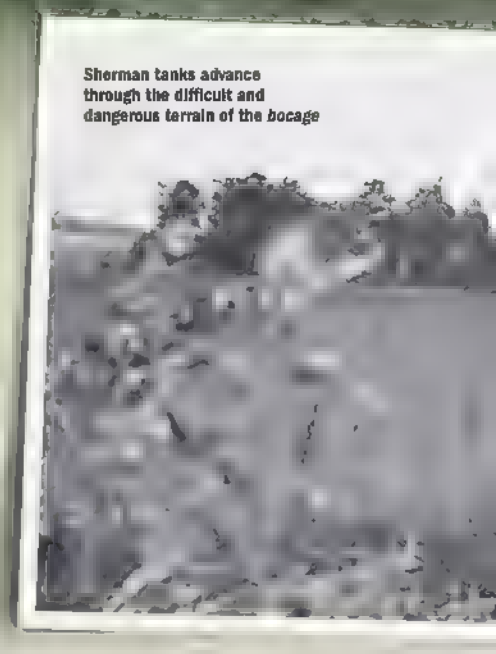
The terrain behind the beachheads favoured the German defenders. Here, US troops dash for cover, surrounded by tall hedgerows



A German grenadier mans a defensive position on the flooded Cotentin Peninsula

Dollmann's suicide

Signalling to Alan Brooke on the night of 27 June, Montgomery proclaimed himself pleased with the development of the battle, and believed that Miles Dempsey would soon have the whole of 11th Armoured Division up on Hill 112. The British were now close to a significant victory, for possession of Hill 112 would allow them to close off the southern approaches to Caen. The danger posed to the German position was all too apparent to the Seventh Army commander, Friedrich Dollmann. Having just been informed of the loss of Cherbourg, he found the loss of Hill 112 too much to bear, and he was dead by the morning of 29 June. The German press claimed that it had been a heart attack, though rumours circulated that he had committed suicide, spurred on by his knowledge that he was about ▶



Sherman tanks advance through the difficult and dangerous terrain of the *bocage*

to be faced with a series of charges relating to his conduct in Normandy. In fact, the situation was far less serious than Dollmann had imagined. The Hussars on Hill 112 had been reinforced by other elements of 29th Armoured Brigade – one of the components of 11th Armoured Division – but the bulk of British forces were still north of the Odon. Too many tanks, trucks and men had been pushed south along too narrow a front. A heavy traffic jam had developed in the streets of Cheux, stretching back to the start line. Because the 49th Division had been unable to advance, the western flank of the jam was open, while groups of Hitlerjugend crawled through the wheat fields by Cheux, sniping at the columns and thereby adding to the confusion.

In the early hours of 29 June, Dollmann's successor, Paul Hausser, who had commanded the formidable 1 SS Panzer Corps on the Eastern Front, was beginning to restore the situation. Hausser ordered the Panzer divisions that had been assembling for the Bayeux offensive to head for Cheux. However, this was hardly a well-coordinated or rapid offensive action, for Hausser was forced to feed the divisions in piecemeal as they reached the Odon. By 29 June, Montgomery's resident Ultra-reading intelligence officer, J Ewart, had received Ultra intercepts that showed VIII Corps in an increasingly precarious position. The 15th and 43rd Infantry Divisions, and the 11th Armoured Division, occupied a corridor nearly six miles long and two miles wide, extending north from Hill 112. Ultra revealed that the 2nd, 9th and 10th SS Panzer Divisions, and Panzer Lehr, were advancing from the west, while 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions, along with the battered but still capable 21st Panzer Division, were advancing from the east.

The British Army advance was slower than anticipated, and the inhabitants of some towns and villages had an agonising wait for their liberators. When they arrived, they were greeted ecstatically

A paratrooper from the 101st fills jerry cans on a captured German Sd Kfz2 Kleine Kettenkraftrad in Carentan

Serious doubts

For Montgomery and Dempsey, the situation now seemed very serious. There was already heavy fighting on Hill 112, where 29th Armoured Brigade had been forced to pull back from the southern slopes of the hill. More seriously, a German battle group had broken into Cheux, a move that seemed to presage the cutting off of what was now called the "Scottish Corridor". But unknown to the British high command, this was the Germans' high-water mark. British artillery and air power had exacted a fearful toll on the counter-attacks, and Hausser was close to admitting defeat. At that moment, believing that Ultra was providing an accurate picture of German capability, Dempsey ordered 29th Brigade to abandon Hill 112 and pull back north of the Odon. During the next 48 hours, German divisions were hit by massed artillery fire, and broadsides from battleships and cruisers, while heavy bombers rained down high explosives. The bombers were not particularly discriminating. In an effort to block the advance of the 9th SS Panzer Division up RN 175, Lancasters reduced the town of Villers-Bocage to a heap of rubble. It was a portent of things to come.

On 30 June, Montgomery gathered his commanders at his new HQ above the village of Bray near the Cersy Forest (a highly publicised visit by King George VI had compromised the location of his original HQ), and announced that, although the envelopment of Caen had not been carried out, Operation Epsom had nevertheless been successful. Critics, who now included much of the US high command, doubted this assessment of Epsom. It was anything but the "blitz attack" that Monty had called for. Instead, it had been an attritional slog in which 15th Scottish Division alone had suffered 2,331 casualties, and during which heaps of bodies had created dams in the gorge of the Odon.

But the Germans had suffered more. Epsom had sucked in the divisions that Hitler had allocated to the great German counter-offensive. The coordinated seven-division attack scheduled for 1 July was the only hope the Germans had of splitting and then crushing the beachhead. Operation Epsom disrupted and defeated the Germans' only real chance of an outright Normandy victory. But this was not readily apparent to the Anglo-American political leadership, who now began to entertain serious doubts about Montgomery's ability as a General.

The first week of July saw both the British and German high commands in crisis. On 2 July, von Rundstedt called Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of OKW, with the news that the counter-offensive was over. When Keitel asked, "What shall we do?", von Rundstedt exploded, "Make peace, you fools!" The stiff-necked old Prussian, now in his 69th year, was not afraid to speak the truth. Three years earlier, he had advised Hitler to abandon Operation Barbarossa, and had been dismissed for his outspokenness. On 3 July 1944, the Führer again relieved von Rundstedt of his command, replacing him with Gunther von Kluge, who was given instructions to hold the existing line, no matter what the cost. Von Kluge was a pliable "yes man" who had achieved

Gunther von Kluge (seen here on the Eastern Front) replaced Gerd von Rundstedt as the German Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front, on Hitler's orders

his eminence by subservience to the Nazi cause – so much so that on his 60th birthday, Hitler had sent him a cheque for 250,000 marks.

Within the beachhead, Monty's position had become just as insecure as that of his erstwhile German counterpart. He had promised Dwight Eisenhower "to continue the battle on the eastern flank until one of us cracks, and it will not be us". He had also promised the airmen additional territory for their airfields, and now that this had not been produced, Arthur Tedder, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, began urging Eisenhower to dismiss Montgomery. Eisenhower now made his first tentative moves to gain Churchill's support for sacking the Field Marshal. He knew that Montgomery had been Brooke's choice as Eighth Army commander, and that Churchill had been deeply ambivalent. Political pressure was beginning to build up on Churchill. Since 23 June, on the Eastern Front the Soviets had been breaking through German defences in Operation Bagration. In addition, since 14 June, German V1s had killed 2,000 and seriously injured another 7,500 in South East England, and the public knew that the only certain way to remove this menace was for Allied soldiers to overrun the launch sites. At a staff conference on 6 July, in the underground cabinet war room, Brooke recorded that Churchill began by abusing Montgomery because operations were not going faster, and repeated Eisenhower's criticism that Monty was over-cautious. "I flared up," Brooke wrote, "and asked him if he could not trust his Generals for five minutes instead of belittling them. He was furious with me, but I hope it may do some good in the future."

Against a background of mounting criticism, Montgomery launched a third major offensive. Windsor and Charnwood were complimentary operations designed both to expand the beachhead and take the north-western part of Caen. On the evening of 3 July, in Operation Windsor, the British battleship Rodney fired 15 16-inch shells onto the village of Carpiquet on the northern side of Carpiquet airfield, just west of Caen. At 5am the following morning, the Canadian 8th Infantry Brigade advanced behind a creeping barrage into the village. Units of the Hitlerjugend resisted from concrete emplacements on the edge of the airfield and, after 24 hours, the Canadian offensive became bogged down.

Overwhelming force

Forty-eight hours later, the main assault, Operation Charnwood, went in against Caen. No army likes house-to-house fighting, and Montgomery was determined not to have his men sucked into a mini Stalingrad. The trick was to remove the houses. At 10pm on 7 July, 467 Lancasters and Halifaxes dropped 2,500 tons of high explosives onto the city. Unfortunately, Caen was still packed with French civilians and the result was devastating. Most of the centre and the north of Caen were reduced to rubble, and at least 6,000 French civilians (mostly women and children) were killed, with many thousands more badly maimed. The bombing did disrupt German supply lines, but it had very little effect on the German defences, which lay north of the built-up area where the bombs had landed. The British and Canadians finally broke through by concentrating overwhelming force – three divisions supported by the gunfire of a battleship, two cruisers and a monitor, along with 250 light bombers – against the German defenders. At Gruchy, to the north-east of Caen, troops of the Canadian 3rd Division charged into the heart of the German positions in 16 Bren carriers of the divisional reconnaissance regiment. The surprised Germans surrendered after a weak attempt at resistance. But in other places, the Germans – particularly the Hitlerjugend – fought to the death, succumbing only to the liquid fire of the flame-throwers of the Crocodile tanks. By 9 July, the Germans had suffered some 6,000 casualties. Neither had British and Canadian casualties been light – about 3,500 were dead, wounded or missing. However, by the evening of 9 July, the British and Canadians held the north-western part of the city. The industrial suburb of Colombelles to the north-east, and the half of Caen that lay south-east of the Orne, were still in German hands.

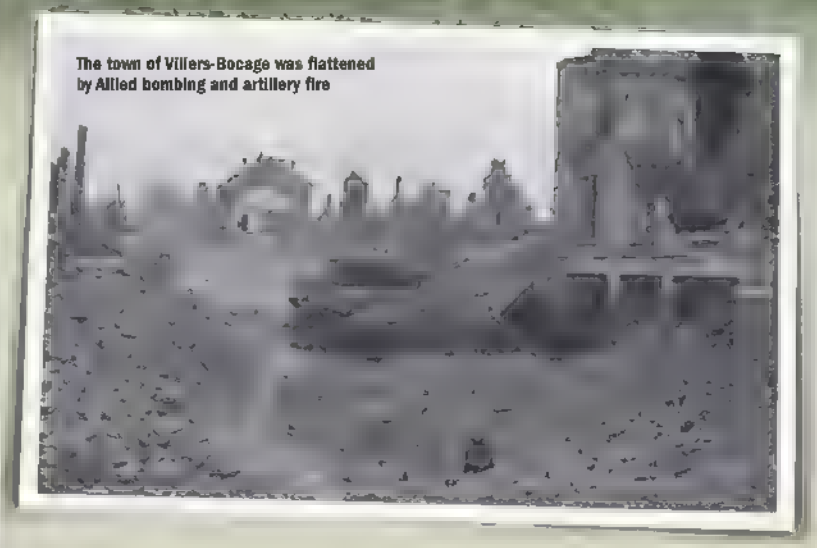
RETRACING HISTORY

THE MUSÉE DE LA PERCÉE DU BOCAGE IN THE TOWN OF SAINT-MARTIN-DES-BESACES IS DEDICATED TO THE EXPLOITS OF ALLIED TROOPS IN THE WEEKS AFTER THE D-DAY LANDINGS. VISIT WWW.LAPERCEEDUBOCAGE.COM

ONE BATTALION, THE 4TH SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY, CLUNG ON IN THE FACE OF NEAR-IMPOSSIBLE ODDS

The fighting in Caen had barely ebbed down when Montgomery launched his fourth offensive, Operation Jupiter, an attack by the 43rd (Wessex) Division against German positions on Hill 112 to the west of the city. It was the start of a vicious attritional struggle that was to go on for weeks. In the first 36 hours, 43rd Division suffered 2,000 casualties in an attempt to gain footholds on the northern slopes. A German counter attack on 11 July almost pushed the British off, but one battalion, the 4th Somerset Light Infantry, clung on in the face of near-impossible odds. At 1am on ▶

A German armoured car in Caen. The heavy bombing seriously hindered Allied attempts to take the city as the rubble provided excellent cover for the German defenders



The town of Villers-Bocage was flattened by Allied bombing and artillery fire

12 July, the battalion launched a counter attack, which immediately ran into heavy resistance. One British survivor, Corporal Douglas Proctor, recalled the horror of that night's attack: "The leading section commander was attempting to scramble through the barbed wire... An enemy bullet pierced his belly and, as a result, exploded the phosphorous grenade he carried in his webbing pouch. Struggling in desperation, he became entangled in the barbed wire and hung there – a living, screaming, human beacon. His only release from the fiery hell was to plead for someone to shoot him as quickly and as mercifully as possible."

The attack virtually wiped out 4th Somerset Light Infantry: of the 36 men in Bert Proctor's platoon who went into action, only nine remained. The battalion was pulled off Hill 112, only for another to take its place. And so it went on, day after day, for another two weeks.

By the middle of July, the fighting in the British and Canadian sectors had become bogged down, and the situation in the American sector was no better. After the fall of Cherbourg, Omar Bradley had turned all his forces south. On 3 July, VIII Corps, under the command of Troy H Middleton, struck down the western coast of the Cotentin Peninsula towards Coutances. Simultaneously, Charles H Corlett's XIX Corps attacked south-east of Carentan, along the Vire River towards Saint-Lô. In the centre, Bradley placed VII Corps under Collins, who had Périers as his objective, a town halfway between Coutances and Saint Lô. Bradley's intention was to secure the Saint-Lô–Coutances road and use it as a line of departure for an all-out offensive to the south-west. Here, two good roads ran parallel to the coast down to Avranches, where the *bocage* gave way to more open country.

Furious combat

The Americans advanced on a broad front through country that was *bocage* at its worst. It was impossible to maintain contact between units, let alone formations. The success of the attack therefore depended on the energy and experience of the platoon commander, and often the death or wounding of the officer would bring an advance to a halt. The Americans found that when rain was falling and the hedgerows were wet, radios could not transmit signals from one field to another. It often happened that a platoon attack in one field succeeded, while attacks in adjoining fields were defeated, which meant that coherence soon broke down. In order to maintain the advance, infantry commanders called in tanks, but the high silhouette of the Shermans made them easy targets for German anti-tank guns. Armed with the Panzerfaust and the more formidable Panzerschreck, anti-tank teams stalked them in the hedgerows, making them more of a liability than an asset.

By 15 July, the four divisions that comprised VII Corps had advanced just seven miles, at a cost of 10,000 casualties. For VII Corps, the situation was even worse. On 4 July, one of its divisions, the 83rd, succeeded in advancing just 200 yards, at a cost of 1,400 casualties. XIX Corps made no better progress. On 7 July, an attempt

WHO KILLED MICHAEL WITTMANN?

As someone who was credited with the destruction of 130 Allied tanks, Michael Wittmann's status as one of the Waffen-SS's most prolific tank commanders is undisputed. What's less certain is who was responsible for his death. On 8 August 1944, Wittmann unwittingly led seven Tiger tanks from the Heavy SS-Panzer Battalion 101 into an ambush near the town of Saint-Aignan-de-Cramesnil, during which his tank was destroyed by Allied shells. Following the war, claims of responsibility were made by everyone from 1st Polish Armoured Division through 144 Regiment Royal Armoured Corps to the RAF Second Tactical Air Force – which is surprising, considering that Wittmann was not well-known to the Allies at the time of his death, so would likely not have been recognised. Indeed, using careful analysis, historians have been able to dismiss most of the claims out of hand, based on location, the kind of ammunition used, etc, and the most widely accepted theory is that the 1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry was responsible. Perhaps these others were just trying to score brownie points by claiming an important scalp – after all, with Wittmann dead, the Allies took one step closer to winning the war.

W MAJOR ATTRACTION
FOLLOWING HIS HEROIC EXPLOITS IN THE ASSAULT ON SAINT LÔ, DURING WHICH HE LOST HIS LIFE, THERE IS NOW A MEMORIAL TO MAJOR THOMAS D HOWIE IN THE CITY.

▶ THE GERMAN BAZOOKA
The German Raketenpanzerbüchse was based heavily on the American M1 Bazooka, which had been captured in some numbers in Tunisia in 1943. The confined spaces of the *bocage* meant that Allied tanks became sitting ducks to well-sited "Panzerschreks".

by 3rd Armoured and 30th Infantry Divisions to exploit a gap in the German defences ended with the divisions mistaking one another for Germans and engaging in furious combat. Both divisions called in fighter-bombers, which strafed both of them without discrimination. Casualties were heavy; by the time the divisions were disentangled, the Germans had plugged the gap.

Pre-emptive strike

On 10 July, Bradley decided that, in order to unhinge the German defences, he would have to capture Saint Lô, which formed the eastern anchor of the German line. The town had been pulverised by successive waves of Allied bombers on 6 June, which had killed more than 800 of the inhabitants and reduced it to a heap of rubble. Saint Lô itself was important only in a symbolic sense. Of paramount importance were the hills and ridges that ringed it to the north and the west. Here, the Germans had dug in some formidable formations Directly north of Saint Lô, there loomed a hill. It appeared on Allied maps as Hill 122 and appeared to American observers to be the key to the defence Two US corps faced this complex of defences – Major General Leonard T Gerow's V Corps, and Major General Charles (Cowboy Pete) Corlett's XIX Corps – but the commanders of both formations decided that a direct attack against Hill 122 would be prohibitively expensive. They decided instead on an alternative strategy, an outflanking move from the east that involved taking the Martinville Ridge and a nearby 150-foot eminence, codenamed Hill 192

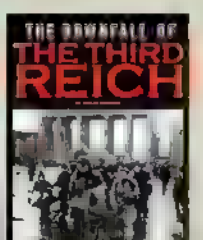
The Americans were under no illusions as to how difficult attacks on these features would be. US 2nd Infantry Division, tasked to take Hill 192, was allocated elaborate support for its attack after dawn on 11 July, but initially everything went wrong A morning mist limited visibility to such an extent that an airstrike, planned to proceed the advance, was cancelled The Americans had moved back several hundred metres to avoid their own bombs and, when the aerial onslaught failed to materialise, had a much longer way to advance under heavy German fire. Enemy defensive positions – bunkers dug into the base of the hedgerows – were difficult to detect, and the first American assault crumbled with some 200 casualties and the loss of six tanks. Later in the morning, 2nd Division resumed the attack, supported by 20,000 rounds fired by the division's own artillery. This time, infantry were able to get close to Germans sheltering behind hedgerows, and bombard them with rifle grenades During the afternoon, the defenders began to withdraw, leaving the Americans on Hill 192, looking south to an even more formidable feature, Hill 101. Meanwhile, the 29th Division had been supposed to attack along the Martinville Ridge, but a pre-emptive strike by German paratroopers during the night inflicted 150 casualties, thereby delaying the assault. The 29th began to advance late in the morning, but quickly came under fire from Hill 101, which slowed the Americans down. The attack finally petered out on 13 July.

THE REGIMENT TOOK THE BODY, DRAPED IT IN A US FLAG, AND LAID IT BEFORE THE SHELL OF A CHURCH

The American commanders now decided that there was no alternative to an assault on Hill 122. Over the next four days, fighting swayed to and fro on the hills around Saint Lô, US firepower eventually wearing the Germans down. On 16 July, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 116th Regiment of the 29th Division managed to break into the town, but intense German shellfire cut them off from the rest of the division. The commander of 3rd Battalion, Thomas D Howie, tried to continue the advance but was killed the moment he broke cover The rest of the 116th attacked the town on the night of 17 July, linked up with the isolated battalions and by mid-morning were fighting their way into the centre of the town. That afternoon, the regiment took the body of Howie, draped in an American flag, to the centre of Saint Lô, and laid it before the shell of a church – a poignant symbol of the death and destruction the Americans had both endured and inflicted to take this little town. That night, morale in Saint Lô was very low. It was scarcely higher anywhere else among the Allied armies in northern France. The campaign was entering its seventh week and, already, the Allies had suffered around 122,000 casualties and devastated the once peaceful province of Normandy, killing or maiming tens of thousands of innocent French civilians along the way. The break-out seemed as far away as ever.

US troops in action in the bocage. They faced formidable opposition from battle-hardened German units

This feature is an edited extract from the book *The Downfall Of The Third Reich* by Dr Duncan Anderson. It is available from Amber Books: www.amberbooks.co.uk



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FOR VALOUR

EDWARD FEGEN

Destined to be a naval hero from the day he was born, Edward Fegen was as selfless as he was fearless. As Steve Jarratt explains, his final act of gallantry aboard HMS Jervis Bay earned him a Victoria Cross and a posthumous tribute from Winston Churchill

FOLLOWING THE FALL OF MOST OF Europe, Britain stood virtually alone against the German war machine. But, as wealthy as it was, the nation couldn't support the war effort without help. Just two weeks after the start of hostilities, the first convoy set sail from Halifax in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, carrying vital supplies bound for British ports and bearing the designation HX 1.

Over the course of the war, 377 HX convoys ran the gauntlet of the German Kriegsmarine, comprising some 20,000 merchant vessels plus their escorts. Around ten per cent of the convoys were attacked, resulting in a total loss of 206 ships, which were either destroyed in the convoy, picked off as stragglers or sunk via accidents.

The HX series ran until August 1944 and, during that time, was engaged in a number of major incidents. In October 1940, HX 79 was attacked by a U-boat wolf pack and lost a dozen ships from its complement of 49.

The problem was that with the Royal Navy stretched thin, these early convoys were often only lightly protected, mainly by armed merchant ships. This was the case with HX 84 – a convoy of 37 freighters and tankers under the sole escort of HMS Jervis Bay, a 1922 British passenger liner converted into an Armed Merchant Cruiser, and commanded by veteran Royal Navy Captain Edward Fegen. HX 84 had been enjoying an uneventful journey across the Atlantic Ocean when, on the morning of 5 November, it was spotted by the feared pocket battleship Admiral Scheer.

Engulfed in flames

Edward Stephen Fogarty Fegen was born on 8 October 1891, to Irish parents in Southsea, on the south coast of England. However, he was brought up in Ballinlonty, County Tipperary, as a staunch Irishman and devout Catholic. Edward was the son of Royal Navy Vice-Admiral Frederick Fogarty Fegen, and the successor to a line of naval officers dating back to 1778, so it was no surprise that he chose to follow in the family footsteps. He was just 12 years old when he joined the Osborne Royal Naval College on the Isle of Wight, and at the age of 18 he was appointed Midshipman on HMS Dreadnought – the revolutionary steam-turbine battleship that gave its name to a generation of warships.

On 4 February 1914, the young naval officer transferred to HMS Amphion, an Active-class

cruiser. Unfortunately, Amphion's claim to fame was that she would be the first British Royal Navy ship sunk after the outbreak of the First World War. In the early morning of 6 August 1911, she hit a mine laid the day before by SS Königin Luise. The front of the ship was engulfed in flames and she suffered around 150 casualties, with many of the men below deck enjoying breakfast. With the ship beginning to sink, escorting destroyers came to rescue the remaining crew. Then, just three minutes later, the drifting vessel struck another mine and sank.

Young Edward managed to survive the ordeal, and saw out the rest of the war on a number of destroyers, rising through the ranks to become second-in-command of Torpedo Boat 26. He was appointed Lieutenant of the Admiralty M-class ship HMS Paladin on 24 July 1917.

On 24 March 1918, Fegen would prove his worth while in command of HMS Garland, escorting a convoy of 16 ships along the English Channel. One of the ships, the 7,951 ton British freighter SS War Knight, turned sharply and collided with the 8,982 ton US tanker OB Jennings, causing an explosion and spilling burning naphtha into the sea. With the water ablaze on the starboard side of Jennings, the crew all attempted to disembark by the port side, causing one of the lifeboats to become swamped. Seeing this, Fegen carefully steered HMS Garland in to rescue the men, then closed alongside the burning tanker, saving those survivors left on board. In all, they rescued four officers and 22 men, and for their part in this valiant manoeuvre, Lieutenant Fegen and the ship's quartermaster, Patrick Driscoll, were both awarded Silver Sea Gallantry medals

One of the few existing photographs of HMS Jervis Bay, which was sunk by Admiral Scheer in 1940

FOR VALOUR
Unsung heroes

HMS JERVIS BAY

The British passenger liner was built in 1922, one of five made for the Australian Commonwealth Line (later to be bought and run as the Aberdeen & Commonwealth Line). The ships were originally used for ferrying emigrants from Britain to Australia, and were named after famous bays in the country's five states. Jervis Bay was seconded to the Royal British Navy at the outbreak of the Second World War, painted grey and fitted with seven six-inch guns, dating from 1898, and two three-inch guns. In 1939, she accidentally sank the British cruiser HMS Sabre when the ships collided while at Rosyth and Jervis' anchor ripped a hole in Sabre's hull. After this, Jervis Bay was repainted in her original colour scheme of green and white hull with tan funnel, which is how she stayed until sunk by Admiral Scheer.

After the rescue, OB Jennings was towed to Sandown Bay on the Isle of Wight, where she continued to burn for the next ten days until she was torpedoed and sunk. The tanker was later refloated and refitted, returning to service only to be torpedoed on 4 August 1918, by U-140, ten miles off the Virginia coast.

SS War Knight was being towed to Watcombe Bay when she hit a mine, laid by UC-17, just off the Needles. The blazing ship was eventually sunk by gunfire, however, the remnants of her cargo of bacon, oil, rubber and lard washed up on the nearby beaches and scavenged by the ration starved locals from the nearby town of Freshwater. Eventually, 38 of the townsfolk were sent to appear in court at Newport, and the train carrying them was nicknamed the Bacon And Lard Special. War Knight now lies upright in 13 metres of water and is a popular attraction for divers.

Hit by a monsoon

When the war ended, Fegen remained in the forces, and he was later seconded to the Royal Australian Navy. During the 1920s, he was appointed to a number of different ships, and his longest tour was an extended stretch of land duty from 1927 to 1929, when he was transferred to the Royal Australian Navy College – situated, coincidentally, in Jervis Bay, New South Wales. While there, he trained young officers and was commended for his performance, earning promotion to Commander.

Fegen's reputation was further cemented in 1929, while commanding the light cruiser HMS Suffolk in Chinese waters. The Dutch trading ship Hedwig was returning to Hong Kong from the Pacific but was hit by a monsoon and ran aground on a reef off the Pratas Islands, an atoll situated in the South China Sea.

Responding to her distress signals, Fegen quickly reached the stricken vessel and, despite the stormy conditions, used motor launches to rescue the 14 crewmen. The Dutch Government subsequently awarded him a lifesaving medal.

The 1930s followed a similar pattern, with appointments to various cruisers, including HMS Dauntless, Curlew and Dragon, and Fegen performing various duties all over the world. He took command of the light cruiser HMS Emerald in July 1939, which was recommissioned at the outbreak of war, and joined the 12th Cruiser Squadron on Northern Patrol in September. This was a line of ships

RESPONDING TO HER DISTRESS SIGNALS, FEGEN QUICKLY REACHED THE STRICKEN VESSEL AND RESCUED THE CREWMEN

operating in the waters between Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe and Orkney Islands, with the intention (as it had been in the First World War) of keeping German ships from breaking out of the North Sea and into the Atlantic.

Emerald's Captain, Augustus Washington Shelton Agar VC, was highly complimentary of Fegen, later writing, "We had as our Executive Officer Commander Edward Fegen ('Fogarty', as he was known to some), my right hand man and a born seaman… I was very lucky to have him on board."

Between October 1939 and August 1940, Emerald was responsible for transporting some £58million worth of gold to Halifax in Canada, as part of Operation Fish – the transferral of more than half a billion pounds to its commonwealth cousin in what was the largest movement of wealth in history. Churchill had devised a secret plan to move huge amounts of bullion offshore, so that the nation could continue the fight should it be overrun by Hitler's forces.

Washed overboard

During the first winter voyages, Agar was again full of praise for his Executive Officer: "I shall never forget the biting cold… the hail and snow blizzards. When boats were either stove in or washed overboard, he was always first on the scene and invariably in the most exposed position. I have met few officers with less regard for their personal safety or more for their crew, and he was universally loved and respected by all on board."

However, Fegen's fate was about to take a drastic turn. On 28 February, at the age of 49, he was promoted to Acting Captain and given command of HMS Jervis Bay, a 14,000-ton liner adapted to wartime duty by the addition of deck guns. With warships in short supply, the Admiralty was forced to requisition 50 commercial liners and convert them into fighting ships. But with only small-bore guns and no real armour, these Armed Merchant Cruisers, or AMCs, soon gained the nickname of "Admiralty-Made Coffins".

Shortly after taking command, Fegen called the crew together to express how pleased he was with his appointment. He also relayed praise from the Navy for the crew's performance; the previous incumbent, Commander JAP Blackburn, had them well drilled and spirits were high. Fegen then paused and said, "So far, we haven't seen any real action, but I promise you this much: if the gods are good to us and we meet the enemy, I shall take you in as close ▶

After Jervis Bay was sunk by Admiral Scheer, the ship's survivors were picked up by the Swedish freighter Stureholm

as I can." If only he'd known how prophetic his words were about to become.

On 1 April, HMS Jervis Bay and its new Captain left Freetown in Sierra Leone, sailed to Dakar in Senegal to pick up supplies, then crossed the Atlantic, arriving in Bermuda on 30 April. The vessel had the dubious honour of being the first ever warship to tie up in the region's historic Hamilton harbour.

Bermuda was being used as an assembly port for feeding ships into the convoys sailing from Halifax in Nova Scotia. A week after her arrival, Jervis Bay set out with convoy BHX 41, rendezvoused with the Atlantic convoy HX 41 about 600 miles east of Newfoundland, delivered the freighters under her protection, then headed back to Bermuda. Over the next three months, Fegen and his crew undertook three similar escorts – BHX 44, BHX 48 and BHX 51. With the latter, they became part of convoy HX 51, which sailed from Halifax on 7 June and arrived safely in Liverpool on 2 July.

In the middle of July, Jervis Bay handed her freighters over to HX 58, then sailed to Saint John in Brunswick, Canada, where she entered dry dock on 22 July for degaussing. This is the process of demagnetising the hull as a counter measure to German magnetic mines. At the same time, she was fitted with 24,000 empty, sealed 45-gallon drums, which were placed in the holds and between decks, in the hope that it would prevent the liner from sinking too quickly if she was hit.

Wolf-pack attack

On 9 September, Jervis Bay set sail from Halifax as the sole escort of convoy HX 72. Halfway across the Atlantic, on 20 September, the ship received the message that SS City Of Benares had been torpedoed and sunk by U-48, about a half-day's steaming ahead. The passenger ship, part of convoy OB 213 en route to Canada, was being used to evacuate children. Despite launching the lifeboats, of the 96 children on board, 83 lost their lives, most from exposure in the bitter Atlantic conditions. In total, only 147 of the 407 people on board managed to survive.

Jervis Bay was given the order to return to Halifax, which Fegen and his crew reluctantly obeyed. On their return, they found that HX 72 had subsequently been attacked by a pack of five U-boats and, over the course of two days, 12 of the 43 merchant ships had been sunk. It was the first notable wolf pack attack of the war.

Naturally, the crew were distraught, and though they hadn't deserted the convoy of their own volition, they would no doubt have felt some blame for the result. It's fortunate that Fegen was held in such high regard by his men. one of his ratings once said, "I think we'd follow old Fogarty anywhere."

Just over a month later, Jervis Bay was called into action once more, as the sole escort of convoy HX 84, comprising 38 merchant ships carrying lumber, maize, steel, fuel and newspaper. The convoy set sail on 28 October

Captain Edward Fegen timeline

1891
8 OCTOBER
Edward Fegen is born to Frederick Fogarty Fegen and Catherine Mary Fegen in Southsea, England. He soon moves to County Tipperary.

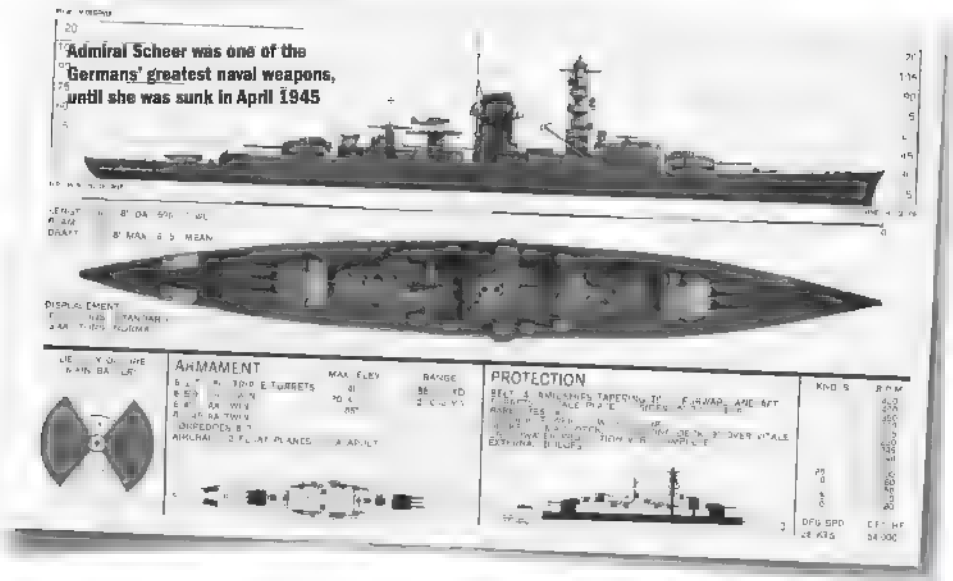
1903
UNSPECIFIED
Keen to follow in his father's footsteps and become a seaman, he joins the Osborne Royal Naval College on the Isle of Wight.

1904
SEPTEMBER
After just a year at naval college, the young man earns the rank of Cadet.

1909
MAY
Aged 18, he is given the role of midshipman on the British battleship HMS Dreadnought.

1913
OCTOBER
After showing considerable promise as the ship's navigator, he rises to the rank of Lieutenant.

1914
AUGUST
At the start of the First World War, Edward is serving aboard HMS Amphion when she is sunk by German mines.



Admiral Scheer was one of the Germans' greatest naval weapons, until she was sunk in April 1945

and headed out into the Atlantic in a huge rectangle formation of four ranks and nine columns, spread over several miles. After a few days at sea, the two Canadian escorts turned back, as was customary, then the convoy lost one of the smaller ships due to engine trouble. The remaining 37 freighters sailed eastwards, with Jervis Bay taking the lead

Admiral Scheer was a Deutschland-class heavy cruiser, often referred to as a pocket battleship. The 15,420-ton vessel was armed with six 11-inch guns in two triple-gun turrets,

DESPITE LAUNCHING THE LIFEBOATS, OF THE 96 CHILDREN ON BOARD, 83 LOST THEIR LIVES

boasting a range of 21 miles, and she had a top speed of 28 knots, or 32mph. This formidable combination meant that few ships in the British or French navies were fast enough to catch her or powerful enough to defeat her. The Allies feared this class of ship even more then they did the U-boats.

Since the outbreak of war, Scheer had been at anchor in the Schillig Roadstead outside Wilhelmshaven, on the north-east coast of Germany. Having survived a British bombing raid in 1939, the ship underwent a refit, gaining a sleek clipper bow, a lightweight command tower, new anti-aircraft guns and updated radar equipment. Another failed British raid in the summer of 1940 left her unscathed, and in October she set out into the North Sea, past Norway, and up above the Arctic Circle, far north of the Royal Navy blockade.

To get to her hunting grounds in the Atlantic, she needed to pass through the Denmark Strait – the stretch of water between Iceland and Greenland – which was heavily guarded by British air and sea forces. For Captain Theodor Krancke and his men, the impending bad weather was their good fortune: as the wintry conditions deteriorated, he headed south towards the Strait in the hope that the poor visibility would help them pass through undetected. The ship's first losses occurred when the boatswain and another crewman were washed overboard while trying to cover exposed ammunition stores in a fierce gale. Krancke turned the ship and ran a search pattern, but after half an hour he was forced to concede that no man could survive the freezing Arctic waters, and so abandoned the search and returned to their south-westerly course.

Despite the worsening conditions – the polar hurricane lashed icy water against the ship at nearly 100mph – Krancke continued on, keen to engage a convoy that had been sighted in the North Atlantic. Ploughing through the Denmark Strait, Admiral Scheer was pounded by 60-70-foot waves and suffered the sort of treatment that would break the back of less-substantial vessels. The ship was heeling up to 37 degrees, flinging equipment and crewmen around the ship, and the sick bay began to fill up with injured personnel.

Battered and bruised

The ship exited the Denmark Strait on 1 November, leaving the worst of the storm behind her. The vessel and her crew were somewhat battered and bruised, but the tactic had worked: Admiral Scheer had slipped through the British blockade, and was now free to hunt down convoy HX 84 on her first combat sortie. Krancke briefed the 1,150-strong crew, then ▶

FOR VALOUR
Unsung heroes

ADMIRAL SCHEER

The Deutschland-class Admiral Scheer was built from 1931-1933 and commissioned on 12 November 1934. The 13,660-ton heavy cruiser was 610 foot long and 70 feet in the beam, and armed with six 11-inch guns. With a top speed of 28 knots (32mph), only a handful of Allied ships could keep up with her. The warship saw action during the Spanish Civil War in 1936-39, and was Germany's most-successful surface commerce raider during the Second World War, sinking more than 113,000 tons of shipping. Admiral Scheer operated throughout the war, seeing a variety of actions in the Atlantic and in the seas north of Europe and Russia. She was eventually destroyed in April 1945 in Kiel Harbour, when RAF bombers hit her with five 12,000lb Tallboy bombs. The ship capsized and was broken up for scrap.

1914-18
THROUGHOUT
Edward spends most of the war at the sea, serving on destroyers HMS May and HMS Paladin, and eventually taking command of Torpedo Boat 28.

1918
MARCH
While in command of HMS Garland, an Acasta-class destroyer, he is awarded a Sea Gallantry medal for rescuing survivors of the burning US tanker OB Jennings.

1921
OCTOBER
Edward is promoted to Lieutenant Commander and, in January 1922, appointed to HMS Whitley, a W-class destroyer.

1922
DECEMBER
He serves aboard HMS Somme, an S-class destroyer.

1924
JANUARY
He is appointed to HMS Volunteer, a W-class destroyer.

1925
JUNE
Edward serves as Divisional Officer on HMS Queen Elizabeth, a 36,000-ton First World War-era battleship, used for boys' training in Devonport and Dartmouth.

FOR VALOUR
Unsung heroes

SS BEAVERFORD – THE FORGOTTEN HEROES

When Jervis Bay sank, convoy HX 84 was at the mercy of Admiral Scheer, who turned her guns on the tanker San Demetrio, setting her on fire. The cargo ship SS Beaverford was quickly overhauled and, knowing his ship and crew were also doomed, Captain Hugh Pettigrew took the fight to the Germans. Although only armed with two four-inch anti-submarine guns, the ship engaged the mighty warship, keeping her busy for several hours until Beaverford was hit, killing Pettigrew and all 78 of his crewmen. None have ever been officially recognised for their sacrifice.

headed for an area of ocean, 100 miles square, where the convoy was thought to be.

The ship was fitted with a pair of small Arado Ar 196 seaplanes, which had, miraculously, survived the Arctic storm. The planes were sent up daily to look for targets and, on 5 November, half an hour into his second flight, pilot Lieutenant Pietsch spotted the telltale array of freighters between the broken clouds. By the time the planes had returned and been winched back on board, it was afternoon Krancke had a decision to make: the convoy lay about three hours away, and it would be dusk by the time he engaged it, giving the ships the chance to escape under the cover of darkness. But if he waited until morning, they would be so much nearer the safety of the British ships en route to meet them, and the weather was beginning to deteriorate. Krancke ordered the attack.

Earlier in the day, SS Mopan had sailed past HX 84. The 7,900-ton freighter was owned by Fyffes and loaded with a quarter of a million bananas bound for England. Her skipper, Captain Sapsworth, had declined to join the convoy, preferring to sail on ahead – straight into the path of the oncoming German warship. If Krancke had tried to steam around Mopan or attack her, it would have sent a radio signal, causing HX 84 to scatter. Instead, he approached at flank speed and ordered the crew to stop the ship and not use the radio. Despite pleas from his radio officer, James Macintosh, to send the single letter R for "raider", Sapsworth did as he was told – presumably fearing for his own life and that of the crew.

Krancke ordered the 76 crewmen to abandon ship so that they could be taken prisoner – which they duly did, in a calm, orderly and decidedly leisurely fashion. The process took an hour, which infuriated the German Captain. Once the crew was on board, he turned Admiral Scheer's guns on Mopan. However, the freighter, too, was also in no hurry – Sapsworth was even called to the Captain, who complained about the length of time it was taking Mopan to sink. Eventually, the rate of fire was increased and Mopan disappeared beneath the waves.

Heavy casualties

It was 3.45 in the afternoon when the ships in HX 84 spotted a dark smudge on the horizon – the smoking remains of Mopan. By now, the sun had set and darkness was just an hour away, but there was another dark spot, about 15 miles away but growing larger. It was undoubtedly a warship and many aboard Jervis Bay believed it to be British; after all, there were far more Royal Navy ships operating in these waters. But Captain Fegen sensed trouble

Jervis Bay repeatedly signalled the challenge "A", using its 36-inch searchlight. Hoping to disguise his identity for as long as possible, Krancke had Admiral Scheer reply with the same signal, as if it were calling Jervis Bay. The British cruiser then sent the signals "M", "A" and "G" in quick succession. Admiral Scheer quickly responded in kind, but the bluff had failed. At this point, Captain Fegen put out the order, "Sound action stations!" and red flares were sent up, the order for the convoy to scatter. At the same time, Jervis Bay and most of the merchant vessels began laying down a smoke screen, using smoke floats, which were thrown over the side.

At a distance of around ten miles, Admiral Scheer turned side-on and brought her guns to bear. If there had been any doubts as to her purpose, the characteristic silhouette of the German pocket battleship dispelled them. Her big guns were trained on Jervis Bay, while her smaller guns were pointed at a tanker nearby

Fegen now knew what he was faced with, and also realised what few options the situation presented him with. He was outgunned and outranged, and, even though he had the greatest devotion to his men, his duty was to protect the convoy at all costs. He decided to place his own ship between the enemy and the convoy, in the hope of slowing her down enough for the other ships to escape into the approaching night. At 4.42pm, Admiral Scheer launched her initial salvo of six 11-inch armour-piercing shells, flying at 2,000 feet per second, which whistled over the heads of Jervis Bay's crew and landed just 100 yards away.

Jervis Bay turned to port and headed towards the German warship, so Krancke ordered all of her guns to bear on the ship. A second salvo fell short, but the ship's quartermaster, Sam Patience, later described how the shrapnel from an exploding shell decapitated the man standing next to him at the forward guns

By the third salvo, Scheer's gunners had found their range and caught Jervis Bay amidships,

UNDAUNTED, CAPTAIN FEGEN ORDERED FULL SPEED AHEAD AND STEERED STRAIGHT TOWARDS THE ENEMY

smashing the wireless office and much of the deck superstructure. With no real armour to speak of, Jervis Bay exploded into red-hot splinters, and casualties were both heavy and horrific. Undaunted, Fegen ordered full speed ahead and steered straight towards the enemy, in the hope of bringing the battleship within range of Jervis Bay's seven six-inch guns. The crew fired continually but the old guns, dating from 1898, were outmoded and the shells repeatedly fell short of their target. The only damage to Admiral Scheer was self inflicted, when the recoil from her huge guns damaged her radar

The next salvo hit the bridge, setting it on fire and putting the ship's fire control, rangefinder, steering gear and wireless out of action.

Captain Edward Fegen timeline

1926
JULY
Edward takes command of HMS Forres, a Hunt-class minesweeper.

1927
NOVEMBER
He embarks on a Senior Officer's Technical Course at Portsmouth.

DECEMBER
He begins a tour of duty as Executive Officer at the Royal Australian Navy College at Captain's Point, Jervis Bay, New South Wales.

1929
JUNE
While at the college he is promoted to the rank of Commander.

UNSPECIFIED
Edward is appointed to HMS Suffolk in the China Seas. Shortly after, he is awarded a British Empire medal for rescuing the crew of the grounded merchant ship Modesty.

1932-34
THROUGHOUT
He spends the next three years serving on HMS Osprey.

Charles Pears' painting *The Jervis Bay Action, 5 November 1940* depicts the last moments of Edward Fegen's ship, which was sunk while bravely defending convoy HX 84

Fegen himself survived the impact but his left arm was severed. Using his right hand to keep it from falling off, in extreme pain and bleeding profusely, Fegen continued to command the ship until another shell destroyed the bridge, killing the Captain and his crew

Jervis Bay continued on her course towards Scheer, her guns still firing impotently, until she was finally halted by yet another direct hit. The ship was ablaze from bow to stern and beginning to sink, yet she continued to fight: survivors recalled the hissing sound as the water closed over the red-hot gun barrels

With the engines stalled and the guns silent, navigation officer Lieutenant Commander George Roe gave the order to abandon ship. The remaining men crammed themselves into three tiny lifeboats, which tossed about on the waves. Those who survived the freezing conditions were later picked up by the convoy's Swedish ship Stureholm. The latter ship's skipper, Sven Olander – though notionally neutral – could not leave the men to the freezing North Atlantic after witnessing their heroic actions. Having fled the area, he later turned his ship around and managed to rescue 68 men.

Gallant course of action

The battle had cost the lives of 187 of Jervis Bay's crew, but had kept Admiral Scheer busy for over three hours, and caused her to expend hundreds of shells in the process, depleting her arsenal. The German vessel went on to sink seven ships of the convoy, with the loss of a further 253 men, but the damage would have been considerably greater had Captain Fegen not taken the gallant, albeit suicidal, course of action. In all likelihood, the majority of the 37 slow-moving merchant ships would have been destroyed.

For his part in the defence of HX 84, Captain Edward Fegen was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, and was remembered in Sir Winston Churchill's famous speech, broadcast on 13 May 1945, where he said, "When I think of these days, I think also of other episodes and personalities. I do not forget Lieutenant-Commander Esmonde VC, DSO, Lance-Corporal Kenneally VC, Captain Fegen VC and other Irish heroes who I could easily recite, and all bitterness by Britain for the Irish race dies in my heart. I can only pray that in years which I shall not see, the shame will be forgotten and the glories will endure, and that the peoples of the British Isles and of the British Commonwealth of Nations will walk together in mutual comprehension and forgiveness."

1934-35
OCT-FEB

He attends a Senior Officer's War Course at Royal Naval College in Greenwich

1935
OCTOBER

He does a three-month stint aboard HMS Beaufort

1935-38
THROUGHOUT

For the best part of four years, he is stationed at HM Dockyard, in command of the light cruisers HMS Curlew and HMS Dragon in the Reserve Fleet

1939
JULY

He takes command of HMS Emerald, a cruiser in the Reserve Fleet

1940
JUNE

He is promoted to Acting Captain in command of Armed Merchant Cruiser HMS Jervis Bay

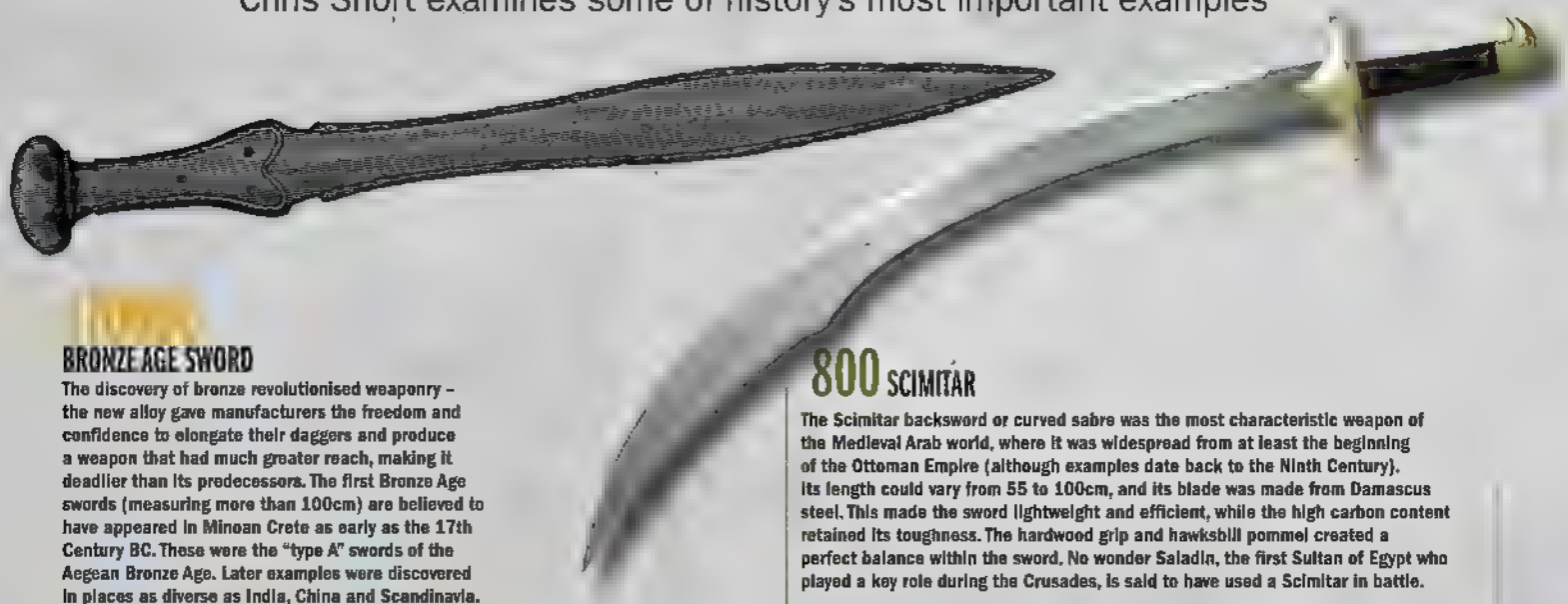
5 NOV

Edward Fegen is killed defending Convoy HX 84 against Admiral Scheer. He is 43 years old

Military MILESTONES

SWORDS

The sword has been romanticised as **the swashbuckler's weapon of choice**, capable of maiming and murdering with one devastating swipe. Chris Short examines some of history's most important examples



BRONZE AGE SWORD

The discovery of bronze revolutionised weaponry – the new alloy gave manufacturers the freedom and confidence to elongate their daggers and produce a weapon that had much greater reach, making it deadlier than its predecessors. The first Bronze Age swords (measuring more than 100cm) are believed to have appeared in Minoan Crete as early as the 17th Century BC. These were the "type A" swords of the Aegean Bronze Age. Later examples were discovered in places as diverse as India, China and Scandinavia.

800 SCIMITAR

The Scimitar backsword or curved sabre was the most characteristic weapon of the Medieval Arab world, where it was widespread from at least the beginning of the Ottoman Empire (although examples date back to the Ninth Century). Its length could vary from 55 to 100cm, and its blade was made from Damascus steel. This made the sword lightweight and efficient, while the high carbon content retained its toughness. The hardwood grip and hawksbill pommel created a perfect balance within the sword. No wonder Saladin, the first Sultan of Egypt who played a key role during the Crusades, is said to have used a Scimitar in battle.

2000BC | 1500 | 1000 | 500 | 0 | 100AD | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 | 600 | 700 | 800

700BC JIAN

In Chinese folklore, the Jiàn is known as the "Gentleman of Weapons" due to its refinement and sophistication, but also due to the intense training required to wield it effectively in a battle situation. This double-edged Chinese straight sword was originally made of bronze, before advances in metal technology allowed it to be constructed from steel. The blade, usually around 70cm in length, was divided into three sections for leverage in different offensive and defensive situations. For example, the tip of the blade was known as the *Jianfeng*, and was used for stabbing and quick, percussive cuts. The Jiàn is still commonly used in Chinese martial arts, and is also depicted in many martial arts movies.

400BC GLADIUS

The Gladius was the primary short sword of Ancient Roman foot soldiers, who favoured it for its practicality and efficiency. Made of either bronze or iron, its short size (just 27 inches long) meant that it excelled in close-combat situations. The Gladius was double-edged and featured a tapered point, meaning that it could be used for both stabbing and thrusting, and the owner's name was often engraved or punched into the blade. After the Third Century, the sword was replaced in the Roman armoury by the longer Spatha.

1100 FALCHION

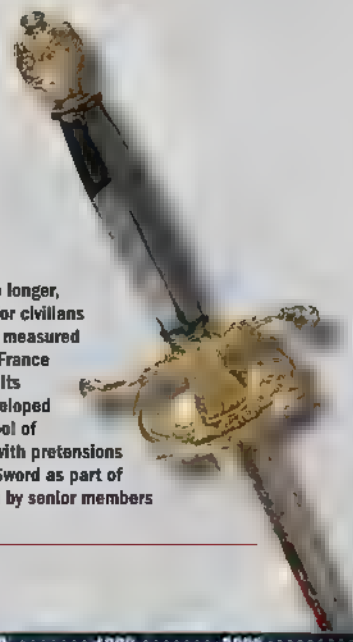
Described by some as a "sword-shaped axe", the Falchion was a one-handed, single-edged weapon that combined the weight and power of an axe with the versatility of a sword. It was popular among peasants but was of low quality, making it unworthy of knights, who owned more expensive swords. Nevertheless, the Falchion was a powerful close-combat weapon – its short, slightly curved blade could tear through armour and was capable of cutting off limbs with one stroke, making it a sword to be feared. Few examples of the weapon have survived to this day.

1390 KATANA

Commonly referred to as a Samurai sword, the Japanese Katana is regarded as one of the most lethal killing machines ever produced. Traditionally made from a specialised Japanese steel known as *tamahagane*, it had a curved, slender, single-edged 60cm blade with a long grip that could accommodate two hands. Its power and finesse made it a nearly undefeatable weapon, hence the popularity of the sword among Samurai (military nobility). The word "Katana" was first used in the 12th Century, and the story goes that in ancient times, the strength of a Katana was measured by how many prisoners it could slice through at once, with the record being eight.

1500 SCHIAVONA

The Schiavona was a renaissance broadsword that became popular in Italy during the 16th and 17th Centuries. It was originally used by the Balkan mercenaries – Istrian and Dalmatian Slavs – who served as bodyguards to the Doge of Venice. These were known as Schiavoni, hence the sword's name. Characterised by its cat-head pommel, the Schiavona was classified as a true broadsword, with a blade much wider than contemporary Rapiers. The double-edged blade, measuring around 90-100cm, was useful for both cutting and thrusting, and as a result the Schiavona quickly gained popularity among Italian armies, becoming the weapon of choice for heavy cavalry in particular.



1650 SMALL SWORD

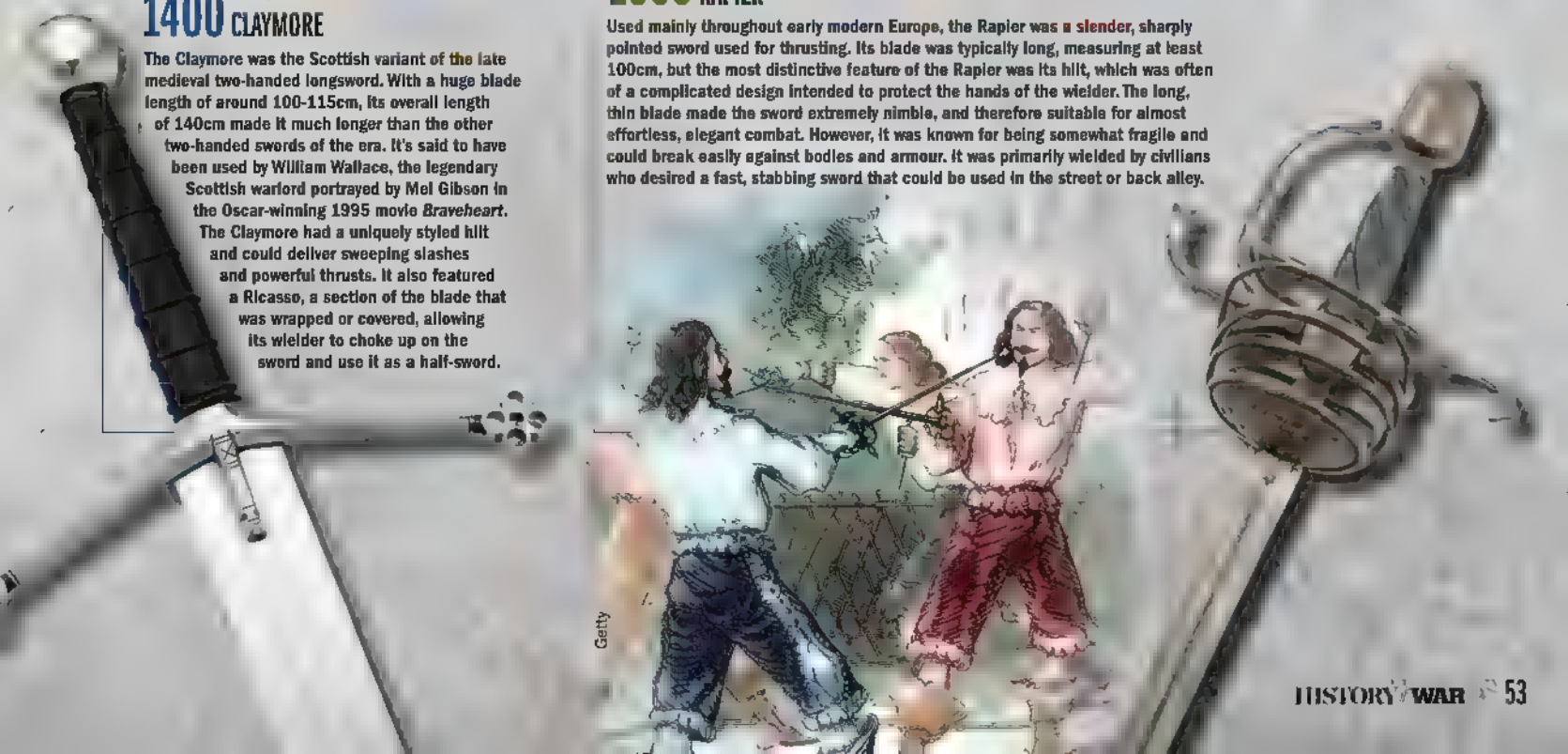
This light, one-handed weapon evolved out of the longer, heavier Rapier, and was a more practical sword for civilians – although no less lethal. Featuring a blade that measured around 60-85cm, the Small Sword originated in France and quickly became popular throughout Europe. Its legacy lies in the fact that its method of use developed into the techniques of the French Classical School of Fencing. For most of the 18th Century, anybody with pretensions to gentlemanly status would have worn a Small Sword as part of their outfit on a daily basis, and it was also worn by senior members of the military as a recognition of rank.

1400 CLAYMORE

The Claymore was the Scottish variant of the late medieval two-handed longsword. With a huge blade length of around 100-115cm, its overall length of 140cm made it much longer than the other two-handed swords of the era. It's said to have been used by William Wallace, the legendary Scottish warlord portrayed by Mel Gibson in the Oscar-winning 1995 movie *Braveheart*. The Claymore had a uniquely styled hilt and could deliver sweeping slashes and powerful thrusts. It also featured a Ricasso, a section of the blade that was wrapped or covered, allowing its wielder to choke up on the sword and use it as a half-sword.

1500 RAPIER

Used mainly throughout early modern Europe, the Rapier was a slender, sharply pointed sword used for thrusting. Its blade was typically long, measuring at least 100cm, but the most distinctive feature of the Rapier was its hilt, which was often of a complicated design intended to protect the hands of the wielder. The long, thin blade made the sword extremely nimble, and therefore suitable for almost effortless, elegant combat. However, it was known for being somewhat fragile and could break easily against bodies and armour. It was primarily wielded by civilians who desired a fast, stabbing sword that could be used in the street or back alley.



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Tyne Cot Cemetery and Memorial, one of the most poignant parts of the All Quiet On The Western Front tour

Road to the past

"THEY SHALL GLEAM WITH SPIRITUAL GLINTER"

First World War: Between 1914 and 1918, the Western Front was anything but quiet – northern France and Belgium resonated with the sound of gunfire and the throes of death. But, as Andy Emerson finds out as he embarks on a tour of the region, peace reigns at last

GROWING UP, I RECALL A FRIEND of mine often talking about his great-grandfather. He had never known him (the old chap in question died many years before my friend was born) but Stevie spoke about him like he was some kind of superhero. "Ginger" (as the great grandfather was affectionately known by his family and friends) had served with Cavalry Corps at the Battle of Ypres in 1914, and – like thousands of other men on both sides of no man's land – had been cut down on Belgian soil, a long way from home. Whenever I went to Stevie's house for parties, his mother would bring out faded old photographs and regale us with stories of Ginger's derring-do – they were so enthralling, they could have been lifted straight out of a boy's comic. Whether those adventures had actually happened or were simply figments of the imagination, like Chinese whispers, had chopped and changed and become more fantastic over the decades, we may never know – but in the minds of Ginger's family he was a hero, and that was enough for them.

A lot of people are like that. When a distant relative passes away, they don't feel the need to delve deep into their life story or engage with their memory on a more tangible level. For them, it's enough to celebrate the relative in question by occasionally bringing out photo albums and regurgitating well-worn family anecdotes. I'm not knocking that – everybody has their own life to get on with – but what it does mean ▶

Ulster Tower, a memorial to the fallen men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, Thiepval

is that history gradually gets diluted as each generation passes, until it's virtually forgotten

It's for that reason that I like to "do my bit" and scratch beneath the surface whenever the opportunity arises – to fully uncover the characters and achievements of past generations. Having been a military fanatic from an early age, I find that battlefield tours provide an exciting opportunity to do just that. So when *History Of War* contacted me and asked me to cover Leger Holidays' All Quiet On The Western Front tour, I jumped at the chance.

Vivid detail

You don't need me to tell you that this year is the centenary of the start of the First World War – what better time, then, to pay one's respects on the former killing fields of Flanders and the Somme? These form part of the tour – and while simply standing where those incredibly courageous men lost their lives would be a fascinating and heartbreaking ritual in itself, Leger's expert guides enhance the experience by bringing the story to life in vivid detail.

I consider myself to be something of an anorak when it comes to war-related matters,

I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE AN ANORAK BUT EVEN I WAS LEFT GOB-SMACKED BY SOME OF THE VIGNETTES AND REVELATIONS

but even I was left gob-smacked by some of the vignettes and revelations. For example, everyone knows about the Christmas truce of 1914, where soldiers from both the British and German armies ceased fighting on Christmas Day to play football and socialise with each other. But it's only when you embark on a tour like this that you begin to engage with the story on a more emotional level. As you gaze out across the fields where those men were fighting, you can imagine how they must have felt knowing that back at home, the Christmas tree was twinkling and the turkey was in the oven; and here they were, cold, desolate and with blood on their hands. Again, Leger's guides are on hand to put their feelings into words, and explain how the truce came about, the "celebrations" undertaken by the two sides, etc

Elsewhere, we learned about Wilfred Owen's role in the Great War. The Shropshire-born poet served on the Western Front throughout the conflict and wrote about his experiences in many of his poems, including *Soldier's Dream*, *Preface* and *Winter Song* (from which the heading of this feature is taken), before being killed in action in 1918. Leger's tour takes in the battlefield at Serre where Owen put down his pen and replaced it with a rifle, and this part of the experience really brought it home to me that the draft did not discriminate: war was not for hardened commandos who were born to kill; it was for the everyman – and woman – and anyone could lose their life fighting for their country, whether they believed in the cause or not (and, of course, many didn't). ▶

Thiepval Memorial, which like the Tyne Cot Memorial remembers missing soldiers

The "Last Post" ceremony at Menin Gate, Ypres

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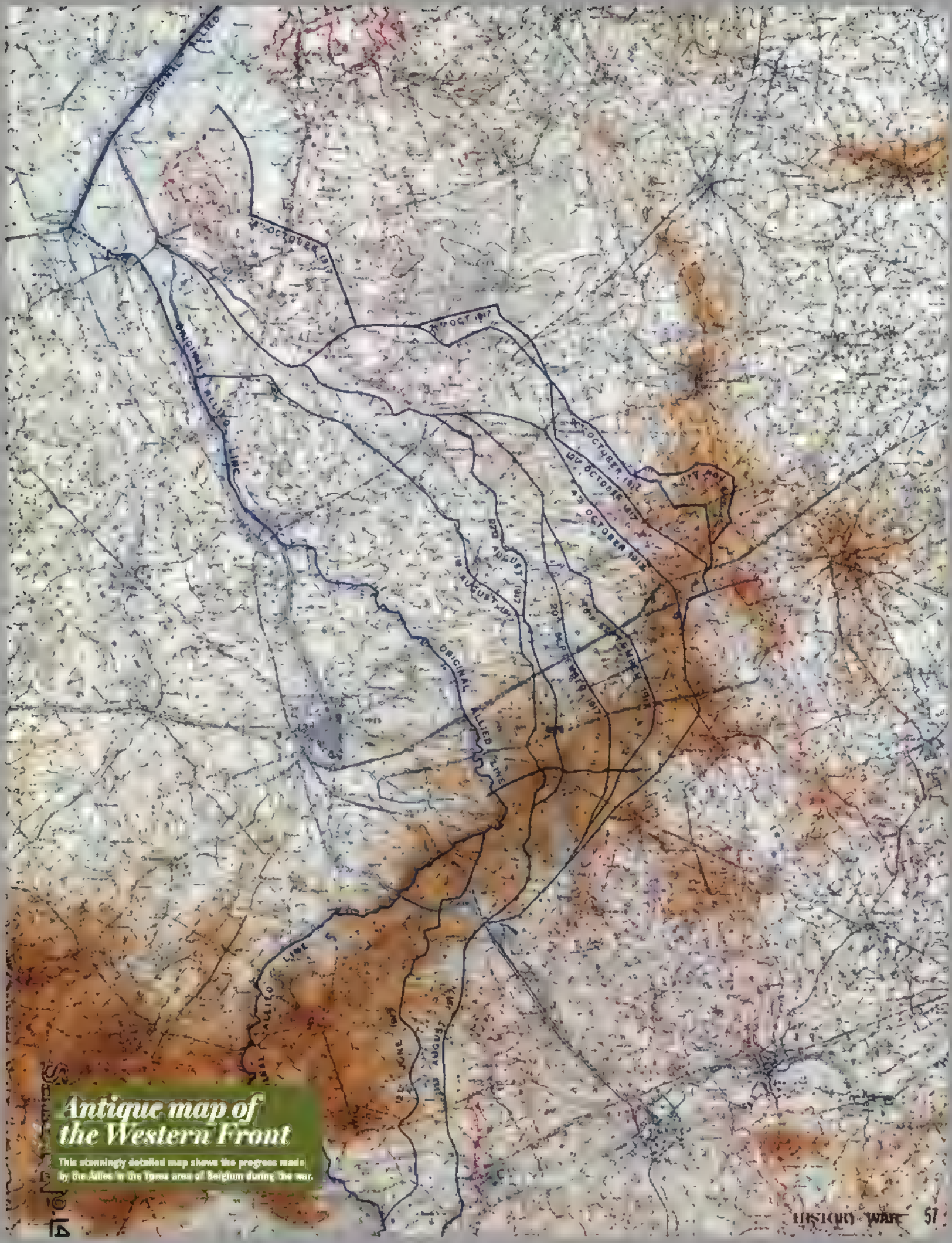

Antique map of the Western Front

This stunningly detailed map shows the progress made by the Allies in the Ypres area of Belgium during the war.

No tour to the Western Front would be complete without a visit to the Sanctuary Wood Museum, Hill 62. Located east of Ypres, close to Hill 62 – where troops of the Canadian Corps defended the southern stretches of the Ypres Salient from German attack – it features a unique collection of items from the Great War, including a rare set of 3D photographs, weapons, uniforms and bombs. But the most fascinating aspect of this part of the tour is undoubtedly the preserved trenches, considered by many to be the finest example in the area. The name Sanctuary Wood is believed to date back to the end of 1914, when the area was used to accommodate stragglers as they waited to rejoin their units. But it soon became a misnomer – the area did not escape the claws of battle, and a particularly fierce engagement here in 1916 cost the lives of many men. Observing the trenches as they are today, it's hard not to put yourself in their shoes and relive their horror in your mind's eye. Soldiers would spend days on end in trenches such as these, and the Hilton they were not. And in the unlikely event that the trenches themselves fail to capture your imagination, Leger's guides will once again be on hand to liven up the experience with their knowledge and storytelling ability.

But, of course, there are times on the tour when words are not needed – or, indeed, appropriate. One such occasion is during the excursion to the Tyne Cot Cemetery and Memorial, close to Leper in the Flanders region of Belgium. While the cemetery is essentially – as you'd expect – a mass of headstones, it brings out more emotions than any Hollywood war film could ever hope to. Perhaps the point is that it's a MASS of headstones, driving home the sheer scale of the casualties of this seemingly pointless war – just in case you weren't already aware. Paying my respects, I could feel a whole spectrum of emotions being squeezed out of me: anger, sorrow, pride and even a sense of relief that I wasn't born during that generation. It's a draining experience, for sure, but at least those men were able to be honoured individually; the Memorial is for the missing – those poor souls who fell in battle and whose remains were never recovered.

SOLDIERS WOULD SPEND DAYS ON END IN TRENCHES SUCH AS THESE, AND THE HILTON THEY WERE NOT

All Quiet On The Western Front

Leger's tour takes its name from a novel by Erich Maria Remarque, a German veteran of the First World War. The book provides a fascinating insight into the physical and mental stress endured by troops as they engaged in battle with the Allies. And, like a lot of the literature that emerged from this side, it focuses on the misery that emanated from living away from home for months at a time.

The novel first appeared in serialised form in the German newspaper *Vossische Zeitung* in November and December 1928, and with ten years having passed since the end of the conflict, many were shocked by the descriptions in the book. Indeed, *All Quiet On The Western Front* (which was published in book form in 1929 and went on to sell 2.5 million copies in its first 18 months) was banned and burned when the Nazis came into power, as it was considered damaging to the German psyche.

In 1930, the book was adapted into a film directed by Lewis Milestone, which went on to scoop two Academy Awards, for Outstanding Production and Best Director.

These are just some of the highlights of All Quiet On The Western Front, and whether you embark on the four-day tour (as I did) or the five-day version, the guides cram in an impressive number of sights and experiences. Cram is probably the wrong word, though – you never once feel like you're being rushed, which is appreciated when you want to spend a few extra minutes remembering the events of that awful war. It also gives you time to ask questions of the guides – and in my case, there were many! It soon became clear that Leger's guides aren't simply former holiday reps who've been thrust into the job to earn some extra cash – indeed, speaking to one of them, I discovered that he had been obsessed with the First World War for as long as he could remember, and had even written books on the subject. Colleagues of his knew war veterans personally and had been able to mine their memories for interesting anecdotes, while others had worked on TV programmes about the war.

One of those guides, Paul Reed, has been regaling war buffs on the All Quiet On The Western Front tour – Leger's bestselling excursion – since its inception 20 years ago, and he fully understands the desire of folk like me to engage with the past. "People see these battlefields as places where they can connect with that First World War generation," he says. "They are places of peace and tranquility now, where nature reigns supreme – and that, in some respects, is the ultimate victory."

All Quiet On The Western Front tour

Leger's four-day excursion to the Western Front costs £279 per person, and includes executive coach travel and hotel accommodation. Coaches depart from over 500 regional joining points. A five-day version of the tour is also available. (The above price is based on a departure date of 25 July 2014, but many alternative dates are available.) Call 0844 324 9256 or visit www.visitbattlefields.co.uk.

To enter our competition to win a tour for two, turn to page 72, where you will also find a full itinerary.

BATTLEFIELD TOURS by Leger

British soldiers enjoy some downtime at White City, prior to the Battle of the Somme, 1916

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Leaders of Men

SHOGUN WARRIORS

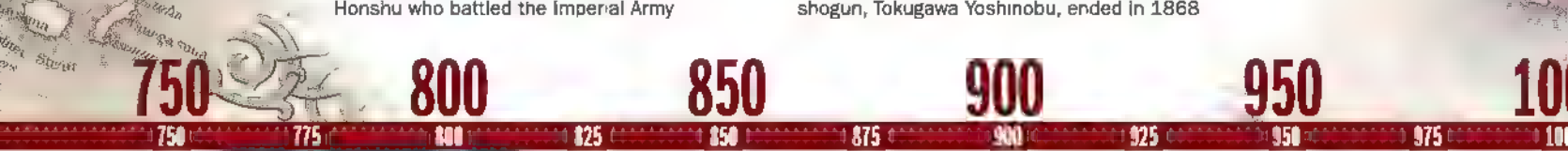
Japan's Emperors may have enjoyed all the glory, but the men who wielded the power were the shoguns – the military commanders who pulled al the strings

In med eval Japan, "shogun" was the term given to the general or m litary governor of the country. And though the role was appointed by the Emperor, the head of state's ro e was largely symbolic; it was the shogun who wielded the power.

The origin of the tile is "Sei i Taishogun", which was g ven to military commanders during the Heian Period in the 8th century. The first general to bear it was Otomo no Otomaro in 794, who was declared "Barbarian-subduing Great General" for his campa gn against the Emishi, guerrilla fighters from north-eastern Honshu who battled the Imperial Army

The founder of the first permanent shogunate was M namoto no Yoritomo, a member of the M namoto clan, who defeated his fam y rivals and the oppos ng Ta ra c an to become the region's military d ctator. Yoritomo set up the first shogunate – or "bakufu" – in Kamakura, on the coast of central Japan, far from the Emperor's palace in Kyoto. Th s signal ed the start of Japan's feudal system wh ch would exist for another 700 years.

The tile of shogun passed from father to son, until the line was wiped out and a competing family would take its place. The ru e of the final shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, ended in 1868



SAKANOUE NO TAMURAMARO

JAPAN'S MOST FAMOUS BLACK GENERAL

758-811

A General and Shogun of the early Heian Period (794-1185), Tamuramaro held many high civi and military positions throughout h s career, and worked for three success ve Emperors. However he's more well-known for the colour of his skin, as Tamuramaro was a black Japanese man, seen as a rarity centuries ago. Of the b ack population of early Japan, he was the most picturesque sing e figure; a warrior symbo sed in Japanese history as a "paragon of military values." Doctor W.E.B DuBois (1868-1963), one of America's most famous scholars, p aced Tamuramaro in a list of some of the most distinguished black rulers and warriors in antiquity. He was appointed shogun under emperor Kammu and given the task of conquering the Emishi Seibatsu, guerilla fighters from the north of Honshu. He vanquished the Emishi and drove them to the island of Hokka do. After his death, he was remembered as the most prominent military person until the beginn ng of the warrior government in the late 12th century.

DID YOU KNOW?

Akakura Mountain worshippers believe that Tamuramaro undertook Shugyo (a warrior's pilgrimage) on Akakura's slopes more than 1,000 years ago, and that his spirit rests there still.

MINAMOTO NO YORITOMO

THE FOUNDER OF FEUDAL JAPAN

1147-1199

The founder and first shogun of the Kamakura shogunate, Yoritomo reigned between 1192 and 1199. In 1185, the Minamoto family, led by Yoritomo, took over control of Japan after defeating the Taira clan in the Gempei War, leading to his establishment as shogun in 1192. His father had previously attempted to kill Taira Kiyomoro of the clan in 1159, but failed, which led to Yoritomo's capture and exile to Izu province, where for 20 years he trained and developed his skills under Taira surveillance. He became a strong, courageous military leader, with the strength of his rule lying in the modern, lord-vassal relationships he established with his followers. In return for their allegiance and military service, Yoritomo provided his vassals with protection and bestowed new lands upon them. This feudal system brought peace and stability to Japan after decades of civil war. His system of government and the way of life he founded would endure until the Meiji Restoration of 1868, when imperial rule was consolidated under Emperor Meiji

DID YOU KNOW?

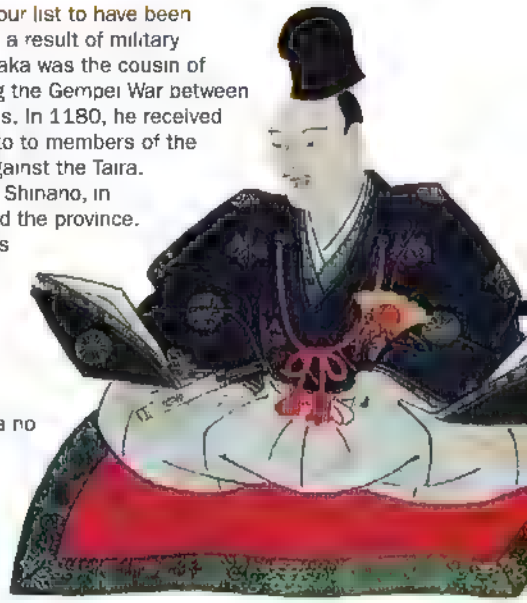
Yoritomo killed several of his eight brothers in fear they might challenge his position. After his death his sons became the second and third shoguns.

MINAMOTO NO YOSHINAKA

SHOGUN BY FORCE

1154-1184

The only shogun in our list to have been awarded the title as a result of military intimidation, Yoshinaka was the cousin of Yoritomo, and his rival during the Gempei War between the Minamoto and Taira clans. In 1180, he received the call from Prince Mochihito to members of the Minamoto clan, to rise up against the Taira. Yoshinaka raised an army in Shinano, in central Japan, and conquered the province. Despite their rivalry as heads of the Minamoto clan, he accepted Yoritomo as its leader but was determined to beat him to Kyoto to defeat the Taira by himself and take control of the Minamoto. He defeated Taira no Koremori at the Battle of Kurikara Pass and marched on Kyoto, at which point the Taira retreated. However, when Yoshinaka's army entered Kyoto, they ransacked the city, causing the Emperor to order Yoshinaka to attack the retreating Taira clan. Upon his return, he found that the Emperor had sided with Yoritomo. Angered by his duplicity, Yoshinaka imprisoned the Emperor and forced him to bestow upon him the full title of shogun. Minamoto no Yoritomo then ordered his brothers to track down and kill Yoshinaka. The shogun fled the city but was captured and killed by his cousins at the battle of Awazu in Omi Province.



DID YOU KNOW?

During his final battle, Yoshinaka had fled to find a safe spot to commit suicide, but his horse became stuck in a field of mud. He was found and killed on the spot.

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MINAMOTO NO SANETOMO

LAST OF THE MINAMOTO DYNASTY

1192-1219

As the second son and third shogun of the Kamakura shogunate, Minamoto no Sanetomo was the final head of the Minamoto clan of Japan. After the murder of his elder brother on the orders of his grandfather, Hojo Tokimasa, Sanetomo became shogun in 1204. However he was never anything more than a puppet for his mother, Hojo Masako, who used him as a political tool to further her interests and protect herself. Furthermore, she used Sanetomo as a pawn in her war with his grandfather, who attempted to depose his grandson of the shogunate on a number of occasions. As a result of his elder brother's murder, Sanetomo would fear for his life until his eventual demise. Eventually, he lapsed into a period of inactivity and alcoholism, becoming plagued by the fear of assassination. On the evening of 13 February 1219, during a snow storm, Sanetomo was descending the steps of the Senior Shrine at Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu in Kanagawa when his nephew attacked and assassinated him. The nephew was beheaded a few hours later for his actions.

DID YOU KNOW?

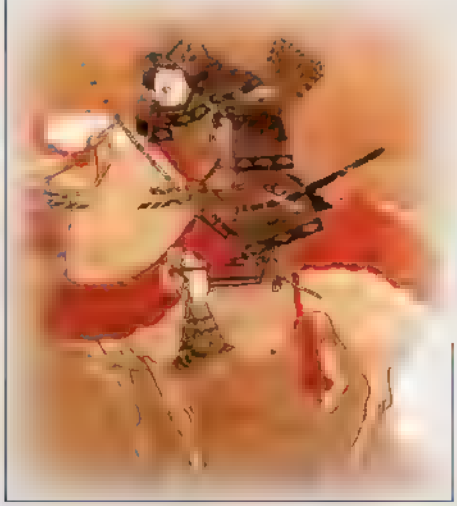
Sanetomo was famous for his poetic prowess, with his most famous work being the Kinkai waka-shu, 716 poems he wrote between the ages of 17 and 22.

ASHIKAGA TAKAUJI

JAPAN'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL HISTORICAL FIGURE

1305-1358

According to Zen master Muso Soseski, the founder and first shogun of the Ashikaga shogunate had three major qualities: he always kept his cool in battle and was not afraid of death; he was merciful and tolerant; and he was extremely generous with those stationed below him. However, the general of the Kamakura shogunate was also a highly controversial figure. The Ashikaga were one of the main branch families of the Minamoto clan who faithfully served the Hojo regents. But due to a mixture of ambition and an increasing dislike for his masters, Takauji rebelled, bringing down the Hojo Shikken (the regent for the shogun) and restoring exiled Emperor Go-Daigo to the throne. However, he would later force the duplicitous Go-Daigo from Kyoto, only for him to set up a rival court in Yoshino to the south. The new Emperor, Komyo, fulfilled Takauji's ambitions by making him shogun in 1338. But through his actions, Takauji had made the dream of Imperial Restoration a reality, only then to destroy this dream in a war between the Northern and Southern Courts that would last for nearly 60 years.



DID YOU KNOW?

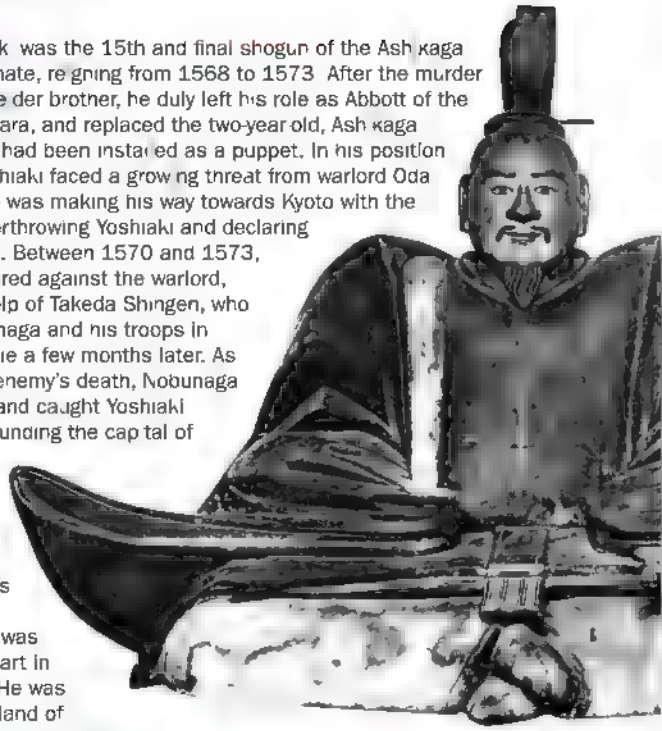
In 1934, a Japanese cabinet minister who published an article portraying Takauji in a favourable light, was forced to resign.

ASHIKAGA YOSHIAKI

FROM MONK TO SHOGUN

1537-1597

Yoshiaki was the 15th and final shogun of the Ashikaga shogunate, reigning from 1568 to 1573. After the murder of his elder brother, he duly left his role as Abbott of the monastery in Nara, and replaced the two-year-old, Ashikaga Yoshihide, who had been installed as a puppet. In his position as shogun, Yoshiaki faced a growing threat from warlord Oda Nobunaga, who was making his way towards Kyoto with the intention of overthrowing Yoshiaki and declaring himself shogun. Between 1570 and 1573, Yoshiaki conspired against the warlord, enlisting the help of Takeda Shingen, who defeated Nobunaga and his troops in 1752, only to die a few months later. As a result of his enemy's death, Nobunaga moved quickly and caught Yoshiaki off-guard, surrounding the capital of Kyoto and forcing him to negotiate. A truce was reached in which Yoshiaki's life would be spared, but he was never to take part in politics again. He was exiled to the island of Shikoku and for years afterwards pleaded with the various daimyos, or local territorial lords, to restore the Ashikaga shogunate, but to no avail. Although he never formally relinquished his role at the time, historians consider 1573 to be the year that the Ashikaga shogunate ended.



DID YOU KNOW?

Despite being ousted from his position as shogun in 1573, Yoshiaki did not officially resign until 1588, and a new shogunate was not formed until 1603.

TOKUGAWA IEYASU

WARRIOR, STATESMAN, UNITER OF FEUDAL JAPAN

1543-1616

As the founder and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, Ieyasu has become one of the most significant figures in Japanese history as the first leader of the final shogunate. At the time of his birth, Japan was engrossed in a civil war with violent feuds that rumbled on for nearly a century. For his own safety he was given away as a hostage to a neighbouring clan, where he received military and political training. Over the next 15 years, he campaigned with the warlords Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, during which time he gained a considerable military reputation. With Nobunaga's assistance he also expanded his wealth and influence. By the time of Hideyoshi's death in 1598, Ieyasu had organised the largest and most effective army in Japan, enabling him to triumph in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, where he defeated the clans of western Japan. This paved the way for a new shogunate, and saw Ieyasu emerge as the most powerful feudal lord in the country. He was appointed shogun in 1603 and his rule was marked by a period of relative peace and stability.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ieyasu worked hard to encourage foreign trade and exchanged gifts with James I of England and other European rulers.

TOKUGAWA IESHIGE

WORST. SHOGUN. EVER.

1712-1761

The son of Tokugawa Yoshimune, Ieshige reigned as the ninth shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate for 15 years between 1745 and 1760. Sadly, his regime was beset by corruption, natural disasters and periods of famine, and his clumsiness in dealing with these issues greatly weakened the rule of the Tokugawa clan. The problem with Ieshige was that he had very little interest in governing political affairs, preferring to focus his attentions on chess, about which he wrote a book. Furthermore, he suffered from chronic ill health and a severe speech defect throughout his life. Due to his disinterest in political affairs, he would often leave decisions in the hands of his chamberlain, Ōoka Tadamitsu. There was a great deal of controversy surrounding Ieshige's reign because his father, who was the previous shogun, had three sons of which Ieshige was the eldest, but the two younger sons – Munetake and Munetade – would have made much more viable candidates due to their good health and stronger heads for government. The decision to place Ieshige as shogun confused everybody at the time and Ieshige never succeeded in convincing them that he was worthy of the title. Indeed Yoshimune continued to rule for the first two years his son was in office

DID YOU KNOW?

Ieshige's remains were investigated between 1958-1960 and it was discovered that his teeth were crooked and deformed, confirming his suggested speech defect.

TOKUGAWA IEMOCHI

A MODERN SHOGUN

1846-1866

The 14th shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate can be argued to be the first "modern shogun" in terms of world events during the time of his reign, which lasted from 1858 to 1866. Known in his childhood as Kikuchiyo Iemochi he changed his name after coming of age in 1851. Iemochi came under increasing pressure from America for Japan to open up the way for greater trade links and commerce between the two countries. However, there was a conflict of interests between Iemochi and the Emperor of Japan, who wanted nothing to do with America and intended to abrogate all treaties and expel the foreigners. This put Iemochi in a difficult position: he would either disobey his legitimate superior, or by adhering to the emperor's demands, trigger a major war. Instead, he tried to delay the matter by procrastinating over decisions, which only angered the emperor more and subsequently Iemochi was forced to deal with the Americans under Commodore Perry. Perhaps fortunately for him, however, Iemochi died before he was able to see things through. It's suggested the cause of death was heart failure due to beriberi, a lack of vitamin B1. Sadly, history has consigned Iemochi and his successor, Yoshinobu, to their place among the weakest shoguns in Japanese history

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1863, Iemochi travelled to Kyoto, with an escort of 3,000 retainers. The last time a shogun had been in the capital was 230 years previous.

TOKUGAWA YOSHINOBU

THE LAST SHOGUN

1837-1913

Yoshinobu holds one of the most important titles of any shogun in history: the last shogun. Originally named Tokugawa Keiki, he was adopted into the Hitotsubashi family at a young age as they were eligible for succession to the shogunate, but had no male heirs to contribute. In 1862, he was appointed guardian to the previous shogun on our list, Iemochi, and tried to introduce reforms to bring the Imperial Court and the shogun into closer harmony, as well as trying to reform the ageing shogunate, the standard of which was fast deteriorating. Yoshinobu was elevated to shogun himself in 1866 after the sudden death of Iemochi and in 1868, a group of radical Samurai seized the palace in Kyoto, declaring an imperial restoration. Although he agreed to accept the results of this coup, his advisers refused and a short civil war ensued. However, when the imperial forces marched on the shogun capital at Edo (today's Tokyo), Yoshinobu forced his troops to surrender, and he subsequently retired, ending the final shogunate in Japan.

DID YOU KNOW?

After his retirement, Yoshinobu spent the rest of his life avoiding the public eye and became a virtual recluse.

Members of the "Glorious Gloster[illegible]
the regiments that as a brigade
against numerically superior Chinese [illegible]

Getty Images

Great Battles

THE IMJIN RIVER

Korean War: Vastly outnumbered by China's vengeful Communist forces, British troops of the 29th Infantry Brigade didn't stand a chance – at least not on paper. But what followed was an act of heroism that stopped the Chinese in their tracks and turned the tide of the war in the UN's favour

IN APRIL 1951, THE 29TH INFANTRY Brigade took up position just south of the Imjin River, digging in on a succession of large hills that dominate the route south. Their commander, Thomas Brodie, was unhappy. The section of front given to his brigade was seven miles long, and a whole division was needed to secure it properly. Brodie's superior, Robert H Soule, commander of the 3rd Division, was certain that the advance would continue shortly; in the meantime, the 29th would have to do their best.

The distance to be defended meant that the three British battalions and one Belgian would not be able to provide fire support for each other. Some of the battalions could not even see the others, and the rifle companies would be as far as a mile apart. The yawning gaps would be easy for the Chinese to infiltrate. The brigade's artillery support was composed of light guns only; the mortars were split to give support to all the units. Little barbed wire and few mines were provided. On top of this, the rocky ground made it difficult to dig trenches; the deepest measured just three feet. Instead, rocks were heaped up into sangars.

THE ROCKY GROUND MADE IT DIFFICULT TO BUILD TRENCHES. THE DEEPEST MEASURED JUST THREE FEET

The 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment held the left flank of the position overlooking a ford through the Imjin. Next to them, inside the curve of the river, were the Northumberland Fusiliers. Across the river to their front was the Belgian battalion, while further back, on the lower slopes of the mighty Kamak san, were the Royal Ulster Rifles, spread along a north-south road on which the Centurion tanks of the 8th Hussars were also stationed. After the horrific winter they had endured, the men were enjoying the warm Korean spring. The Chinese had been retreating for weeks and some officers were worried that the men were getting over-confident. Toby Younger, an engineer, was concerned that, because the brigade had been going forward for months, they weren't in a "defensive frame of mind". For example, it was not known for sure where the river was fordable.

Unluckily for the British, the answer to that question was: nearly everywhere. Although the Imjin was over 270 yards wide, it was shallow ▶

The facts

WHO UN forces – primarily British and Belgian troops of the 29th Infantry Brigade – against the Communist Chinese

WHAT The Chinese launch an assault on UN positions.

WHERE The lower part of the Imjin River, which crosses the border between North and South Korea.

WHEN 22-25 April 1951

WHY Following the UN counter-offensive in March, the Chinese had launched their Fifth Phase Campaign to regain the initiative and recapture Seoul. The offensive at the Imjin River was seen as an integral part of that campaign.

OUTCOME Despite being vastly outnumbered, the 29th Infantry Brigade managed to stave off the Chinese onslaught for three days – although heavy casualties were suffered. As one observer put it, "Though minor in scale, the battle's ferocity caught the imagination of the world."

James Carne, commander of the Glorious Glosters, was renowned for his bravery

and easy to cross. Since arriving on its banks, the 29th Brigade had been carrying out patrols and reconnaissance across the river. Centurion tanks, possibly the best in the world at the time, would usually cross the river and sweep through no man's land. Occasionally, they met small Chinese groups with whom they would exchange fire before the Chinese fell back. But they never came across anything other than that, and aerial reconnaissance confirmed that there were no major Chinese forces in the area.

Inspirational leadership

On 22 April, that all changed. That morning, patrols from the Northumberlands and the Glosters reported large numbers of the enemy advancing towards the river. The Glosters' CO, Fred Carne, headed down to the crossing point and prepared to direct mortar fire at the advancing Communist troops on the far bank. Carne had been in the Gloucestershire regiment for 25 years. When serving in East Africa, he had eschewed the pleasures of Nairobi, preferring to spend time in the bush. In the coming days, he was always to be found where the action was fiercest, and every veteran recalls the inspirational quality of his leadership.

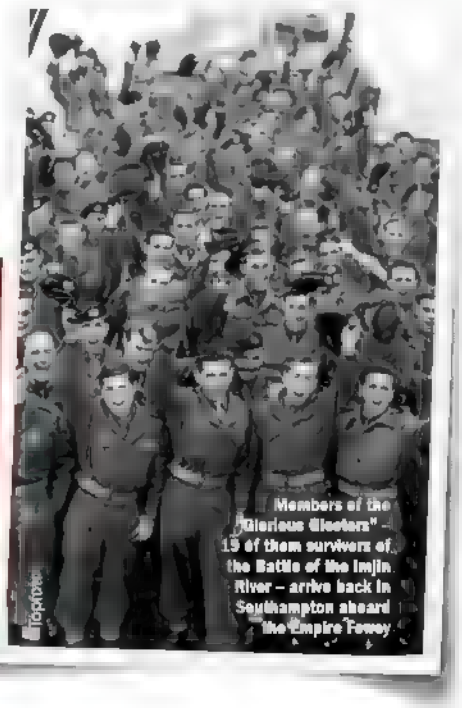
As night fell and the Fifth Phase Offensive crashed into the UN lines, the ROK 1st Division to the west of the 29th Brigade were hit hard and began to fall back, opening a hole to Brodie's left. The 29th were in a vital portion of the line: not only was it known to be the easiest and most likely invasion route to Seoul, but to the north-east were the rest of the US 3rd Division and other UN forces. If Brodie retired, the centre of the UN line across the peninsula would have been outflanked, possibly with catastrophic consequences. The Belgians on the far side of the river were the first to report enemy contact. They were fairly isolated and Brodie decided to get them out. He sent a patrol of Ulsters down to the river to evacuate them but, as they crossed the river, they were caught in a hail of fire. The survivors retreated to the south bank. The battle of the Imjin River had begun in earnest.

On the left of the 29th Brigade, the Glosters held up the advancing Chinese. Guy Temple and his platoon lay on a small rise, pouring fire into the enemy as they tried to cross the river. Temple was a hell-raiser, always in trouble for unauthorised nightclub visits during peacetime, but he was ideally suited for this kind of work. Four attempts at crossing were repelled.

He recalls seeing the Chinese "thick in the water... Somewhere around 2,000 men.... It was an astonishing target, and we did use all our ammunition." When it ran out, Temple was forced to take his men back to the C Company perimeter on a hill a mile or two to the rear.

The Chinese had discovered another ford about a mile below the crossing held by the Glosters, and through the night they streamed south across the river and began to probe the Glosters' defences. The Communist forces realised that the companies were widely spaced, and focused on one at a time. Men in other companies listened to ferocious, isolated fights on nearby hills and wondered when it would be their turn, some of them frustrated that they couldn't do much to help their comrades. The British fought the enemy off as best they could with their Vickers machine guns and three-inch mortars. Two Gloucestershire companies were savaged by countless Chinese attacks: with shrieks and bugles blasting, they came forward with a suicidal lack of concern for casualties. Nineteen-year-old National Serviceman David Green wrote in his memoirs, "The bastards were coming and there was little we could do to stop that flood, except take as many with us as we could." He fought all night, trying to conserve ammunition by firing only at very good targets. He had to be careful, however: "There's always a danger in close combat of hitting one's own mates. With the Chinks crawling all over the spur, stuff was flying everywhere." Lieutenant Whatmore from D Company of the Glosters told his company Sergeant Major on the field telephone, "They are right among us, but we are coping." At dawn, he realised that he and his men had been firing their weapons so much that "they were hot and uncomfortable to handle".

HE HAD BEEN WOUNDED BUT KEPT GOING AND USED GRENADES TO KILL THE CHINESE MACHINE-GUN CREW



Members of the "Glorious Glosters" – 19 of them survivors of the Battle of the Imjin River – arrive back in Southampton aboard the Empire Fowey

Topfoto

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

Their heroics at the Battle of the Imjin River may have brought them international recognition – not to mention the nickname the "Glorious Glosters" – but the Gloucestershire Regiment had already been in existence, in one guise or another, for more than 250 years by the time the Korean War erupted. They had already served at Gallipoli, Macedonia and Burma, among other campaigns, and taken part in the D-Day landings of June 1944. Their full story can be discovered at The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, located in the historic Gloucester Docks (visit its website at www.glosters.org.uk).

US infantry fire 155mm cannon near the frontline, five miles south of the Imjin River

At first light, all the units tried to reorganise. The Ulsters had put up stiff resistance. Mervyn McCord recounted, "it was either they killed us or we killed them." His comrade John Dyer had "never seen so many troops in my life. The hillside was covered in them. We wouldn't be human if we hadn't got scared. A mass of people rushing at you, bayonets fixed, grenades being thrown, shouting, screaming." The Northumberland Fusiliers found to their horror that Chinese troops had infiltrated between their positions and captured some high ground overlooking them: they were forced to fall back. Centurion tanks were sent to help them withdraw and the Ulsters were pushed forward to try to keep the vital road to the south clear.

The Gosters, to the left, were having a tough time. Throughout the night, A Company on "Castle Hill" – named for the ruin on the top – had faced attack after attack. Philip Curtis led a counter-attack to retake the summit. He had been wounded during his charge, but kept going and used grenades to kill the Chinese machine-gun crew; seconds later, he died from his wounds. He won a posthumous Victoria Cross. Later, company commander Pat Angier spoke to Carne on the radio. "I'm afraid we've lost the castle site," he said. "I want to know whether I am to stay here indefinitely or not." Carne told him to hold his positions at all costs. Angier signed off, "Don't worry about us, we'll be alright." Fifteen minutes later, he was killed. He was one of the last men whom there was time to bury. His batman wept. There was one final radio call from the hill: "We've had it. Cheerio."

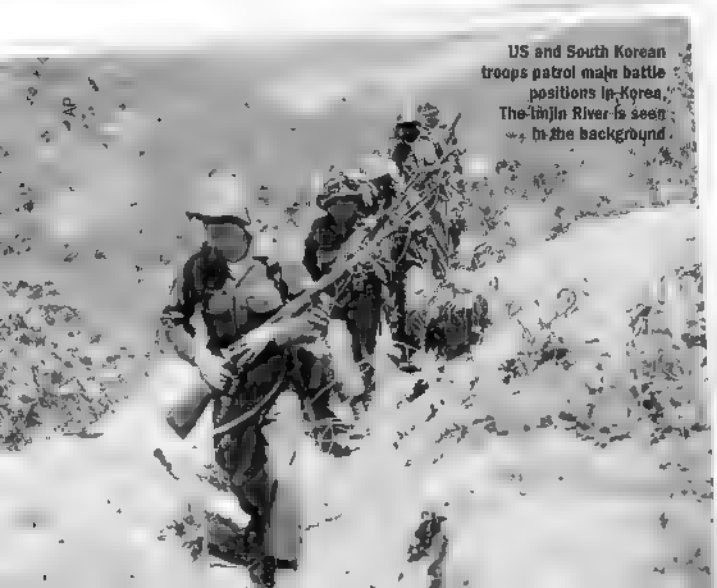
Shattered remnants

The Chinese, however, were suffering even worse casualties. Hwang Chen was a medical officer who later described what it was like to be on the receiving end of UN artillery: "Shells rained down. In front of me, a whole squad was blown to pieces and the bodies of the dead were scattered along the track... I got through but, when I think about it now, I feel terribly frightened." The Chinese infantry were paying a dreadful price for each yard gained on the Imjin.

The Fusiliers tried to make up for their precipitate withdrawal from their positions by counter-attacking up one of the hills from which the Chinese were now firing on them. W Company of the Fusiliers charged up the slope and saw the Chinese fleeing. However, another group of defenders stood up and counter attacked: the Fusiliers fled down the hill. Bullets whipped into the retreating men, and half of those who had attacked failed to return. The action was not entirely futile, though, because it allowed the Belgians to withdraw and redeploy just to the rear of the Northumberlands.

The shadows began to lengthen and the warm, sunny afternoon turned to evening. Isolated on their hilltops, the men of the Gloucestershire Battalion felt a long way from home. During the day, the Chinese had lain fairly low, and tried to reorganise and resupply without attracting US air strikes. But after darkness fell, it would be a different matter. The Reverend Sam Davis remembers thinking, "The Chinese would probably start a night attack and we would be very lucky to survive that." In the daytime, they could call on very accurate artillery to blunt the Chinese onslaught, whereas at night it was hard to spot an attack until it was virtually on the perimeter. Carne realised that his outlying companies would not survive another night, so he withdrew the shattered remnants of A Company and D Company to his own position on Hill 235, which would become known as Gloster Hill. The hill had a gentle gradient, now stripped bare of nearly all of its trees and shrubs, and largely featureless except in a few places where it was bisected by jagged ravines. David Green remembers "trying to dig myself a dugout, having only my bayonet with which to do so, all the picks and shovels having been left behind. It was soon quite obvious that I was wasting my time." C Company joined them on Gloster Hill, but B Company were under too much sustained Chinese pressure to withdraw. ▶

▲ **READY FOR BATTLE** This illustration gives an idea of the military uniform worn by US Army soldiers in Korea, around the time of the Battle of the Imjin River



US and South Korean troops patrol main battle positions in Korea. The Imjin River is seen in the background.

All night, B Company fought off attacks, and they only joined the rest of the battalion at dawn.

That night, the Chinese came screaming out of the dark again. The Glosters suffered terribly and, in turn, inflicted huge numbers of casualties on the enemy. There was hand-to-hand fighting. Sergeant F E Carter was manning his Bren gun and fired hundreds of rounds. He recalls, "Once more, they overran our position I can remember ducking as they ran by our trench on to Company HQ, only to be driven back once again by our section higher up the hill." Trenches were captured and recaptured as small groups of men fought with bayonets and knives. Carter's mate Spud had spent the night "throwing grenades as fast as he could pick them up", but by dawn "he was lying face down in the bottom of the trench; he never moved when I shouted to him". On the morning of the 24th, there were probably only 400 effective combat troops left out of the 700 there had been two days earlier. B and C Companies had to be merged into one weak company. In the dawn light, they could see hundreds, if not thousands, of Chinese in the valleys below, swarming to the rear. They made an easy target and horrific casualties were inflicted on them by British artillery-men, their shots carefully coordinated by spotters on Gloster Hill.

New threat

The Gloucestershire Regiment wear two cap badges. As well as the normal badge on the front of their berets, they have another in the form of a sphinx worn at the back of the head. It commemorates the heroic stand of their forebears, the 28th Foot Regiment, at the Battle of Alexandria in 1801, when they were fighting the French infantry to their front and were then attacked from behind by cavalry. Rather than panicking, their Colonel ordered the rear rank to about face and deal with the new threat. Despite being 150 years old, this proud tradition gave a real boost to the beleaguered Glosters: from Came down, nobody doubted that they could stay on that hill until they were reinforced.

An attempt to break through to them was made. A hastily assembled force, including ten British Centurion tanks, advanced up the track towards Gloster Hill, while Filipino infantry attempted to clear the slopes on either side. The day before, such a rescue mission might have worked, but now the hills were alive with Chinese troops who had pushed beyond the Glosters. The operation had to be abandoned when one of the Filipino light tanks leading the column was knocked out by a mortar or a mine and blocked the road. The column withdrew.

As troops of the 29th Brigade withdrew, they destroyed their equipment to prevent the enemy from using it. Seen in the background is the 650-foot-high hill on which "D" Company made their last stand

Getty Images

WHEN THE NAPALM BEGAN TO FALL, ADMIRATION CHANGED TO DISGUST AND PITY FOR THE CHINESE

They were 2,000 yards short of Gloster Hill. It was Brodie who ordered the withdrawal, possibly disobeying Soule, who wanted them to stay and resume their advance in the morning. But even if they had managed to break through to the Glosters, it's entirely possible that they would have been unable to break out again.

Brodie was very anxious. Having borne the brunt of an attack by two Chinese divisions, he had requested a withdrawal, but his American commander had ordered him to stay. The 29th Brigade were holding a vital section of line. American units were withdrawing on their right and if the 29th gave way, the Americans could well be attacked from the flank and rear as they pulled back. Many of the survivors of the brigade feel that Brodie and his American superiors failed to communicate as effectively as men from the same nation and cultural background would have done. Brodie famously told Soule that things were "a bit sticky". This classic piece of British understatement was not fully appreciated by Soule as he attempted to extricate his entire division from massive enemy attacks, and resources were not committed in proportion to the threat that the 29th Brigade faced. Perhaps Brodie didn't want to be seen to let the Americans down. Anthony Farrar Hockley, at the time a Captain in the Glosters, remained angry until his death in 2006 that the brigade didn't withdraw to prepared defensive positions they had dug and wired only weeks before.

Brodie could well have felt that to insist on withdrawing or to ask for extra support might reflect badly on the British. But the fact was that the 29th Brigade were not up to the job of stopping two crack Chinese divisions. The light-artillery pieces of the 45th Field Regiment were not enough. Unfortunately, the Glosters' US artillery liaison officer had been withdrawn just hours before the battle, and they had no way of calling in the American medium and heavy guns. In the same way, the air strikes that had proved so decisive in the war thus far were in short supply in the battle on the Imjin. Either the Americans were unwilling to use precious resources on foreign troops when their own needed help, or the 29th Brigade weren't making their predicament clear.

When air strikes did arrive, they were lethally effective. David Green and his fellow Glosters watched in awe as Mustangs gave a "brilliant display of precision strafing no more than 50 yards from us". But when the napalm started to fall, "Our admiration changed to disgust, and even pity for our Chinese counterparts."

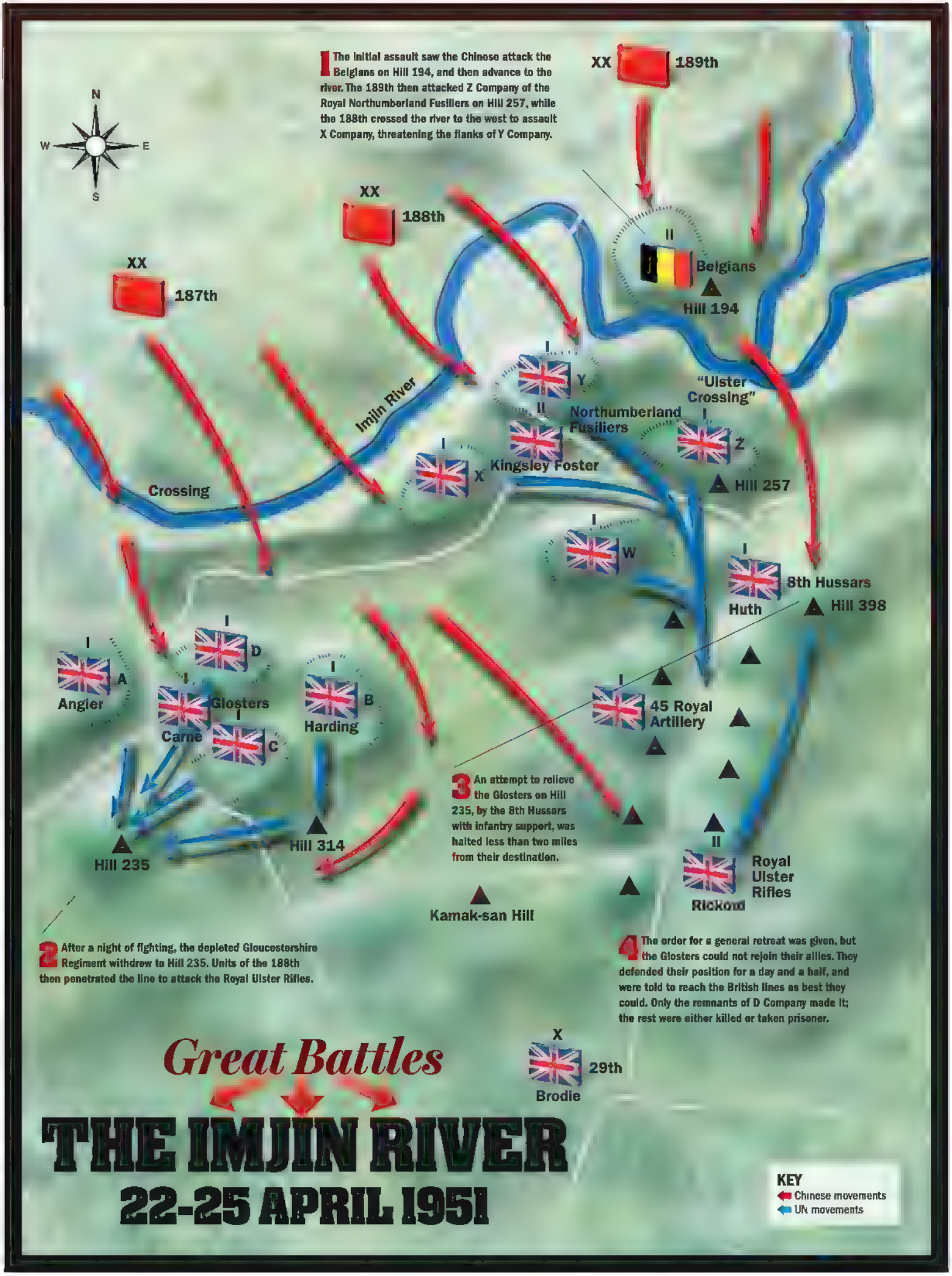
Despite the blithe confidence of the men that someone would come and get them out, the battle continued with dwindling ammunition and no sign of reinforcements. David Green remembers an attempt to airdrop supplies to them. "At last, we saw the Dakotas in the far distance, headed our way... the parachutes began to ▶

CENTURION TANK

The British-built Centurion first entered combat with the British Army during the Korean War, and went on to become a key player in the conflict. Following its role at the Battle of the Imjin River, where the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars' squadron of Centurions covered the withdrawal of the 29th Brigade, the tank received plaudits from US General John O'Daniel, who said, "In their Centurions, the 8th Hussars have evolved a new type of tank warfare. They taught us that anywhere a tank can go is tank country: even the tops of mountains."

While the Centurion is known as an incredibly resilient machine (it went on to serve in the Indo-Pakistani War, Vietnam, Yom Kippur and many other conflicts), it still required proper care and attention to ensure that it survived the tough Korean winters: the tanks had to be parked on straw to prevent the steel tracks from freezing to the ground, and the engines had to be started every half an hour.

It was worth the effort, though – only five Centurions suffered damage at the Imjin River, and most of those were able to be repaired.


1 The initial assault saw the Chinese attack the Belgians on Hill 194, and then advance to the river. The 189th then attacked Z Company of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers on Hill 257, while the 188th crossed the river to the west to assault X Company, threatening the flanks of Y Company.
N
W
E
S
XX
189th
XX
188th
XX
187th
II
Belgians
Hill 194
Imjin River
I
Y
II
Northumberland Fusiliers
"Ulster Crossing"
I
Z
Hill 257
I
X
Kingsley Foster
Crossing
I
W
I
8th Hussars
Huth
Hill 398
I
D
I
A
Angier
I
Glosters
Carne
I
C
I
B
Harding
I
45 Royal Artillery
3 An attempt to relieve the Glosters on Hill 235, by the 8th Hussars with infantry support, was halted less than two miles from their destination.
Hill 235
Hill 314
Kamak-san Hill
II
Royal Ulster Rifles
Rickow
2 After a night of fighting, the depleted Gloucestershire Regiment withdrew to Hill 235. Units of the 188th then penetrated the line to attack the Royal Ulster Rifles.
4 The order for a general retreat was given, but the Glosters could not rejoin their allies. They defended their position for a day and a half, and were told to reach the British lines as best they could. Only the remnants of D Company made it; the rest were either killed or taken prisoner.
X
29th
Brodie
Great Battles
THE IMJIN RIVER
22-25 APRIL 1951
KEY
Chinese movements
UN movements

tumble out. To our anger and disappointment, they drifted like dandelion seeds in the wind and fell outside our perimeter." The Northumberlands were forced to throw tins of cheese at the Chinese, hoping they would be mistaken for grenades. The men were exhausted - unable to sleep at night because of the continuous assaults, during the day they were pounded by mortars and pinned down by sniper fire from the higher slopes

Finally, on the night of 24-25 April, Brodie got permission to withdraw. The commander of the Royal Ulster Rifles was furious – his men had repulsed all attacks and leaving the high ground would place them at greater risk. He was ill-informed about the rest of the brigade, however: the Fusiliers were at the end of their strength and the Glosters would experience another night of vicious fighting, often hand-to-hand. Carne himself led counter-attack after counter attack, but when Anthony Farrar Hockley asked what he had been up to, he replied vaguely, "Oh, just shooting away some Chinese."

A Chinese victim of the fighting in Korea

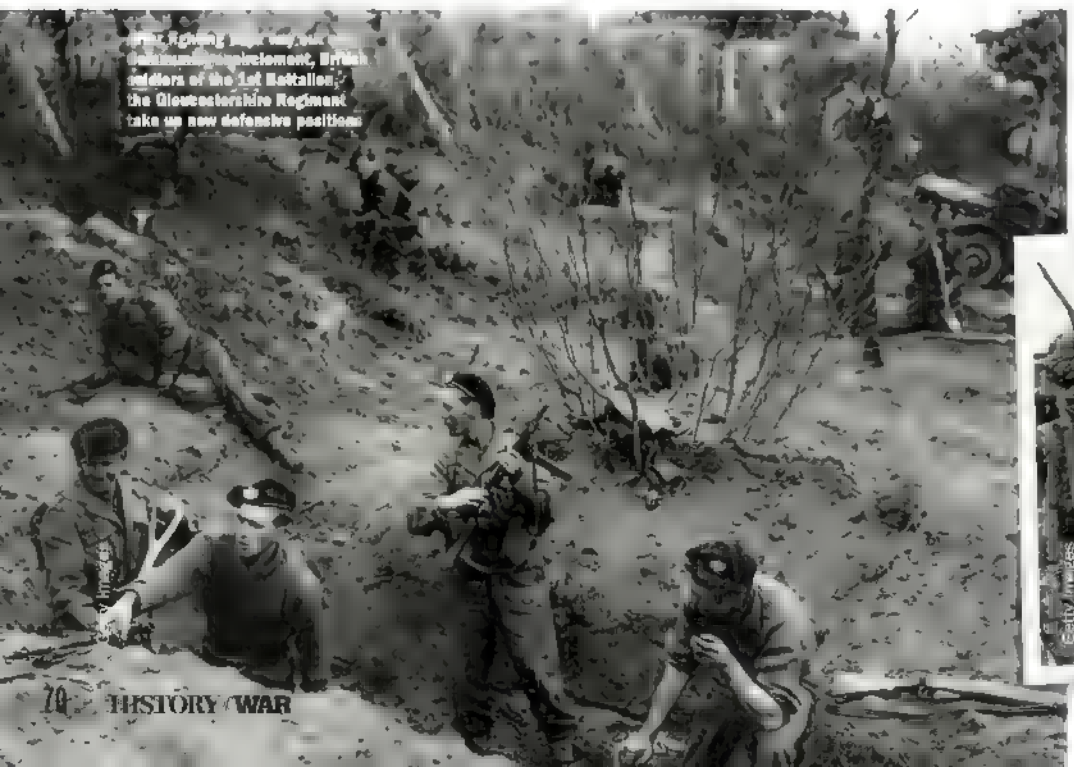
Smashed equipment

At 8am on the 25th, the Fusiliers began their retreat; the Chinese looked down on them and pressed home their attacks with increased vigour. Deprived of sleep for up to 72 hours, the men stumbled in a trance down the road to the south. Some of the Ulsters held a crucial defile through which they passed to relative safety. The rest of the Ulsters and the Belgians leap-frogged down the hill – one unit holding, the next withdrawing and setting up a position further back, and so on. This is one of the hardest manoeuvres in warfare and, slowly, the men lost their cohesion, with groups of infantry making off down the hill towards the track to the rear. It was now that the tank, which had had a very quiet war so far, finally came into its own. British Centurions sprayed the hillside with their machine guns and main armament; others ferried the wounded and exhausted fugitives back down the road. Eventually, the Chinese rushed onto the road and threw themselves onto the hulls of the tanks; they turned their guns on their fellow tanks to try to clear the Chinese off, and one tank commander drove through a Korean house to try to dislodge a Chinese soldier who was trying to get into his turret hatch. The Colonel of the Fusiliers was killed as he retreated in his jeep; he had ignored a warning that the track was being swept by enemy fire, which was attracted by vehicles in particular. It was a race between the British on the road and the Chinese as they moved across country and fired down upon them A US force had taken a blocking position across the road and, as the last of the Centurions passed through it, word was passed that, "Everybody's come down who's coming." The road behind them was strewn with bodies and smashed equipment, wrecked by their crews so that they would be of no use to their enemies.

Another brief attempt was made that morning to rescue the Glosters. The US 65th Infantry Regiment moved into the defile that had halted the rescue mission the day before, but Chinese fire and the discovery that only the lightest tanks could fit up the road meant that it had to be called off. The last hope for the beleaguered battalion was gone. The Glosters were finally told that there was no chance of relief. Carne informed Brodie by radio, "What I must make clear to you is that my command is no longer an effective fighting force." However, "If it is required that we stay here... we shall continue to hold." He asked what had happened to the armoured column. The response was, "It isn't coming." Carne now faced a decision: should he stay, surrender or attempt to break out? As he offered words of encouragement to his men, his adjutant, Farrar Hockley, ordered the drum major to respond to the endless Chinese bugling with his own. He was to play every call he knew, "except retreat". The drum major stood to attention and played *Reveille*, *Cookhouse*, *Defaulters* and *Officers Dress For Dinner*

The final blow came at 9.30am, when Carne was informed that the other battalions had now withdrawn and the Chinese were so far behind them that they threatened the artillery. The 45th Field Regiment were going to have to pull out their guns. The importance of the artillery is brought into sharp relief by the fact that its removal made Carne's decision easy for him It was absolutely impossible to survive where they were without the British guns holding off the enemy. The night before, the Glosters had called in fire on their own positions. The men had stayed low while shells exploded around them, sending showers of shrapnel upwards and outwards to kill the attacking Chinese.

Carne ordered his company commanders to lead their men back to the British lines



Getty Images

British fighting men, part of the Commonwealth contingent, British soldiers of the 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment take up new defensive positions

Getty Images

Soldiers of the "Glorious Glosters" pictured on their Bren gun-carrier

The wounded would have to stay where they were; the chaplain and some medical staff stayed behind with them. As the companies prepared to leave the hill, the last ammunition was parcelled out: each man had no more than two or three rounds left for his rifle. Captain Harvey led 90 men of D Company north towards the river, then turned and headed back to the UN lines. After brushes with the Chinese, the survivors found some American tanks, which at first opened fire on them and inflicted some casualties. When they identified themselves, Harvey and his remaining 39 men were taken back to UN lines. They were the only survivors of the Gloucestershire Battalion to get there.

A, B and C Companies headed directly to the south, but ran straight into a machine-gun position. It fell to the tough and ambitious Farrar Hockley to sacrifice professional pride and shout for his men to lay down their arms: "It was a shameful moment, surrendering. I hated doing it." Carne evaded capture for 24 hours, but was eventually brought in. For some, it was an awful repetition – they had spent the majority of the Second World War as German prisoners, and now a long stint in a Chinese prison faced them. Thirty of the Glosters would not survive captivity.

It was a disaster. There were a thousand 29th Brigade casualties – around a quarter of their frontline strength. The Glosters lost around 70 killed and 200 wounded, while 530 men entered captivity. In return, the brigade had inflicted terrible slaughter on the attacking Chinese: 10,000 is the figure given, although it's only a very rough estimate based on observation.

THERE WERE A THOUSAND 29TH BRIGADE CASUALTIES – A QUARTER OF THEIR FRONTLINE STRENGTH

Commander of the 8th Army James Van Fleet and overall UN commander Matthew Ridgway were disappointed to lose the Glosters. In public, they heaped praise on them, Van Fleet calling their stand "the most outstanding example of unit bravery in modern warfare". He later said that the loss of the Glosters had been necessary to save the whole 8th Army. They even received a Presidential Unit Citation. But in private, there was concern. Van Fleet ordered that, from now on, all units should be kept within supporting distance, and were not allowed to be cut off. Ridgway wrote to him on 9 May: "I cannot but feel a certain disquiet that down through the chain of command, the full responsibility for realising the danger to which this unit were exposed, then for extricating them when that danger became grave, was not recognised nor implemented... I have the feeling ... that neither the division nor the corps commander was fully aware by direct personal presence as near the critical spot as he could have gotten of what the actual situation was."

A weary Korean girl, carrying her brother on her back, poses in front of an M-26 tank, Haengju, Korea, 9 June 1951

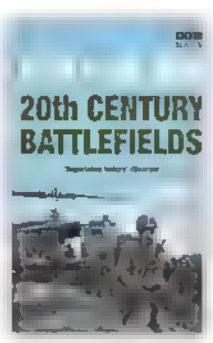
One last offensive

In his book *The War In Korea*, Ridgway wrote that "the brigade held its vital positions for three days, thus enabling I Corps to complete their withdrawal successfully". Even taking into account exaggeration, the action fought on the Imjin dramatically slowed down the Chinese offensive and allowed the rest of the 8th Army to "roll with the punch". Any chance that the Chinese had of taking Seoul was crushed. They had sustained horrific casualties and their timetable had been completely thrown. When they did resume the advance, they found that the UN had withdrawn to a line known as "Golden", just north of Seoul, which had been constructed by Korean workers over the previous weeks. The 25th Division's sector of it alone had 786 crew-served weapons, such as heavy machine guns, and was protected by 74,000 yards of double-apron wire fence, 510,000 sandbags and 25,000 logs. The Chinese carried food for only five days and, with so much time and effort having been taken up fighting the 29th Brigade on the Imjin, the spent forces had no chance of smashing through this fortified line.

Nevertheless, the Chinese crawled forward, hammered by artillery and air attacks, and made an attempt on Seoul; but they were beaten back with heavy losses. They tried to cross the Han River in small boats, but aircraft, artillery and naval fire decimated them and the survivors struggled ashore to be met by a South Korean battalion that showed no mercy. They had no choice but to withdraw; their offensive had bought them only 25 miles of territory. One last offensive was tried in the east of the peninsula, where, on 16 May, the ROK were routed and a wedge driven into the UN lines. But this time, there was no shortage of US artillery. Van Fleet called it his "day of fire". "I want to stress," he said, "we must expend steel and fire, not men. I want to stop the Chinaman here and hurt him. I want to be strong enough in position and firepower to defeat him. I want so many artillery holes that a man can step from one to another. This isn't an overstatement; I mean it."

The Chinese attack finally ground to a halt. The UN had lost around 25,000 men in decisively defeating both attacks of the Fifth Phase Offensive, the Communists an estimated 85,000. Its lessons were immediately obvious: the Chinese could no longer expect to arrive on the battlefield and watch the fleeing backs of their enemies; the UN had mastered the tactics needed to inflict massive casualties. Marshal Peng reported to his political masters that it would be months before his forces recovered from their losses. Never again did the Chinese attempt to win the war with a spectacular breakthrough on the battlefield.

This bridge across the Imjin River was built to carry UN convoys to Kaesong for ceasefire meetings



This feature is an edited extract from the book *20th Century Battlefields* by Peter and Dan Snow, published by BBC Books, RRP £9.99. It is available from www.eburypublishing.co.uk

HISTORY of WAR

WIN! A TRIP FOR TWO TO THE WESTERN FRONT

Preserved trenches offer a highly emotive experience

As you'll discover on page 55 of this issue, Leger Holidays' All Quiet On The Western Front tour is a fascinating and poignant experience (see itinerary opposite) – and the good news is that you can win a four-day trip for two to the battlefields of Flanders and the Somme courtesy of Leger. To stand a chance of winning, simply follow the link opposite.

LEGER HOLIDAYS

Leger Holidays is a tour operator that runs a number of awe-inspiring military tours, covering everything from the World Wars to Waterloo and the American Civil War. To find out more about its excursions or to book, call the company on 0844 346 0808, or visit leger.co.uk

PRIZE WORTH £538!

BATTLEFIELD TOURS by Leger

The four-day All Quiet On The Western Front tour

Day 1 – Local departure by coach, then onwards to Belgium or northern France for a three-night stay.

Day 2 – Battlefields of Flanders. Today, you will look at the battlefields around Ypres. This was the main British battlefront in World War I, where more than 250,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers died. The tour starts at the preserved trenches at Sanctuary Wood and takes in the museum there before moving on to Tyne Cot Cemetery. In the afternoon, you will head to the Messines Ridge sector and the nearby Irish Peace Tower, which commemorates the role of Irish troops in the conflict. At Ploegsteert, you will study the story of the Christmas Truce and see the Ploegsteert Memorial. The day ends at the "Last Post Ceremony" in Ypres. Each night, at 8pm, *The Last Post* is played at the Menin Gate, which commemorates approximately 55,000 soldiers who were never found.

Day 3 – The Somme, Death Of A Generation. The haunting Somme battlefield is your destination today. The day begins at the Historial Museum at Péronne, then it's on to the largest British mine crater on the Western Front at La Boisselle. At Thiepval, you will see the Memorial and visitors' centre, then it's on to the Ulster Tower, which commemorates those from Ulster who fell in the Somme. Next up is Newfoundland Park with its preserved trenches, before the day ends at Serre, where you will see the area where war poet Wilfred Owen fought.

Day 4 – To Calais and return home.

www.historyofwar.co.uk/competition

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The prize is for two people to embark on Leger's All Quiet On The Western Front four-day break (tour reference 4BWF). The break includes executive coach travel and three nights' shared accommodation with continental breakfast on days two, three and four. The holiday must be taken by 30 June 2015. Travel is to and from your chosen Leger joining point, subject to availability – supplements may apply. No travel insurance or spending money is included. There is no cash alternative. The prize is not transferable. The promoter reserves the right to substitute the prize with another of the same value should this prize for any reason become unavailable. Full brochure terms and conditions apply. Ask staff for details or request a brochure from www.leger.co.uk. The prize draw is open to residents of the UK who are over 18 years of age, except employees of Sunway Travel (Coaching) Limited, their subsidiary companies or their agents and families. The winner will be drawn at random from all entrants received by 7 August 2014. The winner may be required to take place in publicity and agrees to their photograph and town/city details being used in promotional literature. Only one entry per household. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry to the prize draw implies acceptance of these rules as being final and binding.

RECONSTRUCTING D-DAY

Second World War: Seventy years on from the greatest invasion in the history of warfare, Nick Soldinger discovers that one remarkable hi-tech project is ensuring that the achievements of the Normandy landings are being preserved for posterity

Beneath the waves off the coast of Normandy is a giant marine graveyard. There, rusting, covered in coral or slowly sinking into the sands, are hundreds of tanks, vehicles, weapons and, no doubt, human remains, relics from the D-Day invasion that happened there 70 years ago this month. It's not inconceivable that in another 70 years, the sands of time will have swallowed all of it completely.

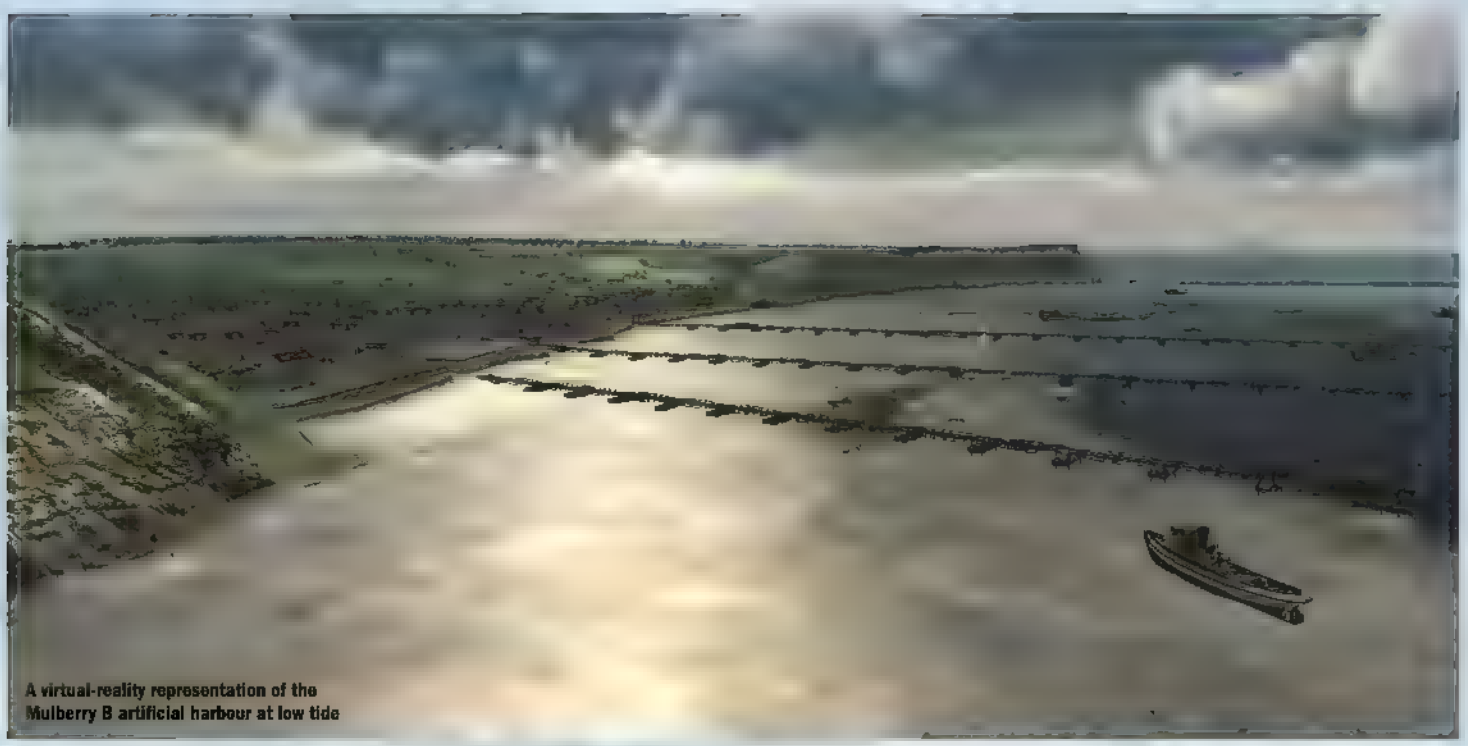
To ensure that as much of that epochal event as possible is preserved, a team of experts using state-of-the-art technology have been working to capture this history as close to intact as is possible. Archaeologists, historians and engineers have been collaborating not just to document what is still here, but also to recreate what is already apparently lost. Dassault Systèmes, a French company specialising in 3D software design, has undertaken a mammoth project – to create a virtual reconstruction of the engineering feats that made D-Day possible. And it's started with three that were crucial to the success of the operation.

Terrifying Insight

Although we primarily think of the D-Day landings as a seaborne invasion (indeed, the campaign was even codenamed Operation Neptune), around 25,000 airborne troops played a key role in securing vital inland targets such as bridges, crossroads and strategically important villages, the night before the ships appeared on the horizon. Those who didn't parachute in were brought in by glider – many of them in the WACO CG-4R, or the Hadrian as the British dubbed it.

These gliders were mostly constructed from wood and canvas, and it's thought that not one of the original 14,000 built for D-Day has survived. Dassault Systèmes' aim, therefore, was to build a virtual one, from scratch, using 3D technology. Not surprisingly, the company started with the original blueprints for the aircraft, but these had deteriorated so badly that they were deemed unusable. Even those that had been preserved on microfilm were so badly copied that the dimensions were illegible.

A meticulously rebuilt model did, however, exist in Minnesota, which the team mapped using lasers. They took over two million measurements of the reconstruction from every angle. This data,



A virtual-reality representation of the Mulberry B artificial harbour at low tide

along with insight gained from photographs and interviews with veterans, allowed them to rebuild a virtual 3D model of the glider, capturing every rivet, strut and inch of seat covering.

They then put this virtual aircraft into a simulator and recreated how the plane handled, and how hard it would have been to land in a Normandy field in the middle of the night, even simulating a crash to discover what kind of injuries the men inside would have suffered. More than just a gimmick, this provides modern historians a unique, if terrifying, insight into the past. The flimsy fuselage clearly offered little or no protection from trees, hedgerows or indeed Rommel's Asparagus – the name given to the million or so five-foot-high wooden spikes the German Field Marshal erected all over the Normandy countryside to thwart glider assaults. As US military historian Professor John McManus has pointed out, "Landing in a WACO glider would have been extraordinarily dangerous. You basically landed out of control!"

"The new Noah"

Of course, the majority of men who landed on D-Day came in by sea, and the LCVP landing craft brought in well over 100,000. Again, despite over 20,000 of these plywood boats being built, none have survived to this day.

These shallow-hulled barges were also known as Higgins boats, after their designer Andrew Higgins, a boat builder and entrepreneur from New Orleans who had a background in designing craft that could be used in the shallow waters

DESPITE OVER 20,000 OF THESE PLYWOOD BOATS BEING BUILT, NONE HAVE SURVIVED TO THIS DAY

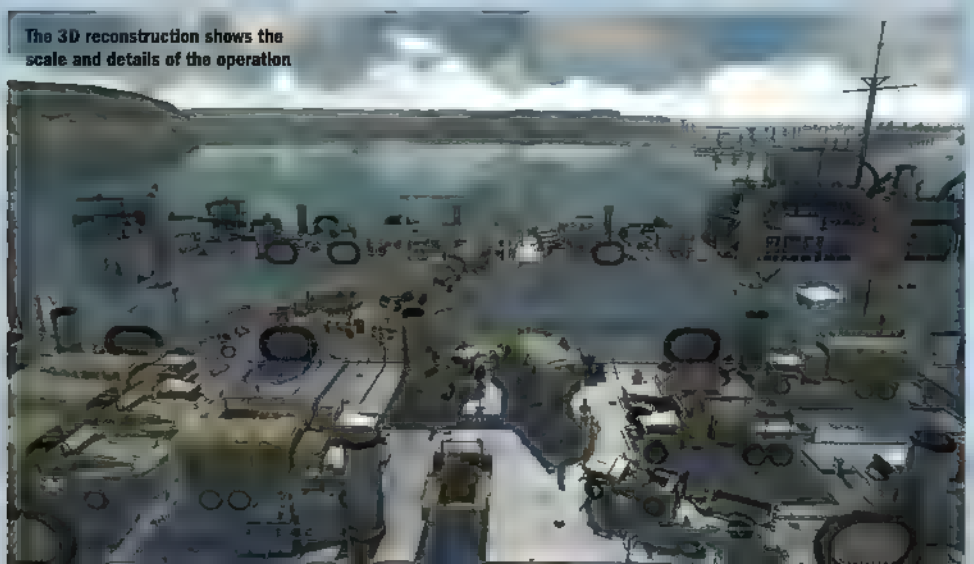
of the Mississippi river. His boats were seen as so vital to the Allied victory that General Dwight D Eisenhower, who oversaw the invasion, described him as "the man who won the war for us". Adolf Hitler, meanwhile, grumpily acknowledged him as "the new Noah".

Luckily, Higgins' original blueprints for the boat still exist – having been salvaged from New Orleans after the Hurricane Katrina disaster of 2005. For the most part, they were also in good enough condition for the designers to work from to create an accurate, virtual 3D landing craft. By bringing one back to life, though, insights were discovered that weren't apparent just from studying the blueprints or photographs.

Following the plans, designers ensured that the boat had a second, smaller rudder, and that the two panels that made up its bow weren't flat but more closely resembled the shape of a shallow, inverted "V". When they put the 3D craft into the simulator, they could see why. Both modifications helped the craft to manoeuvre better when it was withdrawing backwards from the beach – which they would have done time and again in the choppy water to collect more troops.

Virtual masterpiece

As incredible as the work on the glider and the landing craft undoubtedly is, Dassault Systèmes' virtual masterpiece is the recreation of the giant floating harbour that was assembled off the ▶



The 3D reconstruction shows the scale and details of the operation

A WACO glider's flight is accurately simulated

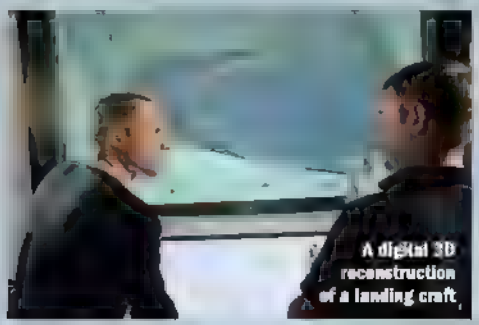
Allan Beckett's kite anchors moored the floating structures

Landing craft operating within the artificial harbour

coast of Arromanches within a week of the D-Day landings

From the moment France fell in 1940, it was known that there would have to be an invasion if the continent was to be liberated. After the disastrous Dieppe Raid in 1942, it became clear that France's ports were so heavily defended that any attempt to seize one could doom that invasion to failure.

Churchill, who of course had been the brains behind the doomed Gallipoli landings during the First World War, was aware that no seaborne invasion could succeed without a harbour to resupply the bridgehead. If one could not be taken, he reasoned, then a floating one would need to be constructed.



A digital 3D reconstruction of a landing craft

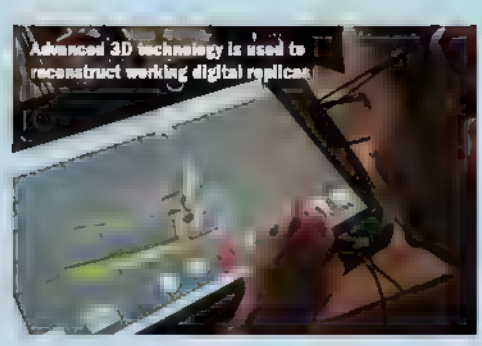
Incredibly durable

It fell to a young Captain of the Royal Engineers, Allan Beckett, to come up with a design. He dreamt up an ingenious, floating ten-mile-long road system that rested on pontoons he nicknamed whales. These were attached to the seabed with a specially designed anchor that dug itself deeper into the ocean floor with each passing tide. The roadways themselves had the ability to twist, in pitching seas, up to 45 degrees without detaching themselves from the pontoons, making the whole structure incredibly durable.

Two of these harbours were created and nicknamed Mulberry A and Mulberry B. A was to resupply the Americans at Omaha Beach, B was to service the Brits and Canadians at Gold.

Before the tens of thousands of pieces that made up the bridges could be hauled across the Channel from England, however, lagoons had to be created for the harbours to be built in. This was done using dozens of block ships – decommissioned vessels, the largest of which was a First World War battleship called The Centurion – that were scuttled out to sea to create a breakwater. Huge concrete caissons were then brought over and sunk to create a more permanent sea wall to protect the jetties and floating roadways. Once all of this was in place, a flotilla of tugboats hauled the component parts over like a pair of gargantuan jigsaw puzzles, and the two harbours were erected

PART VIDEO GAME, PART LIVING MUSEUM, THIS D-DAY PROJECT COULD WELL BE THE FUTURE OF HISTORY



Advanced 3D technology is used to reconstruct working digital replicas

Dassault technology

– an under fire. Incredibly, the American forces managed to get theirs up within three days of the landings; the meticulous British took a slightly less impressive week. The harbours' durability was then tested almost immediately.

Freak storm

Between 19 and 22 June, a freak storm howled through the Channel, causing 800 ships to either sink or wash up on the beaches – more than the Germans managed to sink during the entire campaign. It was the worst summer storm in over 40 years, and modern meteorologists suspect that the huge amount of human activity in the waterway, as war raged across Normandy, may well have played its part. Whatever the cause, Mulberry A did not survive. In their eagerness to get it operational, the Americans had cut corners when it had come to securing the whales properly, and the roadway broke up in the heavy seas.

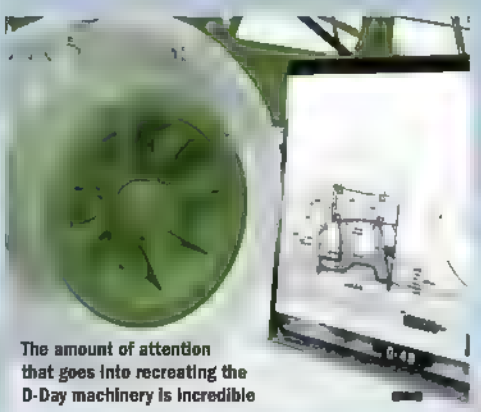
Mulberry B survived, however, and became the principle point of supply for the invasion until Antwerp was eventually taken six months later. Although only designed to last three months, Mulberry B (which was the size of Dover harbour!) remained in service for nearly ten. At its peak, 9,000 tons of supplies were coming in via its makeshift motorway every day, and by the time it was decommissioned, 2.5 million men, half a million vehicles and four million tonnes had passed through it.

The remarkable virtual reconstruction Dassault Systèmes has created to tell this story allows the user to not only look at the Mulberry harbour as it was, but to actually immerse themselves in it. It's impressive enough when viewed on a flatscreen TV or computer monitor, but the 3D experience allows the viewer to use their own imagination to give a much more powerful insight into what they are looking at. Although still in development, the simulation can already be used in conjunction with new 3D headsets that allow the user to take a virtual stroll through the harbour and enjoy a 360-degree view of the enormous structure, just by turning their head.

As marine engineer Tim Beckett, son of the genius who invented the Mulberry harbours told *History Of War*, "It really is an astonishing experience. It truly is like stepping back in time. What would my father have thought? I think he would have found it fascinating."

Part video game, part living museum, this could well be the future of history.

To find out more about Dassault Systèmes' D-Day project, visit www.3ds.com/dday/.



The amount of attention that goes into recreating the D-Day machinery is incredible

Dassault Systèmes' lab specialist Nicolas Serikoff (left) with Allan Beckett's son, Tim

Submariners paved the way for the Allied armada on D-Day

The X men's most dangerous mission

Part of the project to document the D-Day landings on their 70th anniversary involved marine archaeologists exploring the Normandy coastline in mini-subs. For one of the dives, they were joined by 93-year-old veteran Royal Navy submariner Jim Booth, who had played a pivotal role in the success of the invasion.

On the night of 2 June 1944, Jim's crew left the Isle of Wight in their midget sub X Craft 23. Measuring just two metres by 15, it was powered by a diesel engine taken from a London bus. With another X Craft – the X20 – to their starboard, they slipped quietly across the English Channel. On 4 June, the X Craft fixed their positions just off the Normandy coast – X 23 off Sword Beach, X 20 off Juno. During the day, they remained submerged. "We were so close to the enemy," Jim recalls, "that we watched them through the periscope playing football on the beach. They had no idea what was coming!"

As night fell, though, under cover of darkness and in wild seas, X 23 surfaced, raised its antennae and listened in to the BBC's 9 o'clock news bulletin. A coded message in the broadcast would reveal if the invasion was imminent. It wasn't. Bad weather had caused a 24-hour delay, and the X men had to spend another perilous day waiting underwater.

Then, on 6 June, the submarine re-surfaced, set up an 18-foot-high beacon and shone a green light towards England. Visible up to five miles northwards, it was unfathomable to the Germans, who couldn't have dreamt what was steaming towards them.

"It was a spectacular sight," Jim says, remembering the D-Day armada as if it were yesterday. "After the beach had been pulverised by air attacks, we watched the ships appear over the horizon. Then the first huge wave of landing craft passed in front of us. It was dawn by then. We'd seen them safely in."

TRIGGER POINT

THE START OF THE FALKLANDS WAR

Facing political unrest and economic turmoil, Argentina's ruling military Junta gambled on an invasion of the Falkland Islands in the hope of shoring up public support. But it had not bargained on the British government's resolve...

FOR THE SAKE OF A TINY CHAIN OF islands 8,000 miles away from our shores, a full-scale war wouldn't appear to be worth the cost and sacrifice of lives. But to the surprise of millions of Britons in 1982, that's exactly what happened as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher fought to ensure that Britain's sovereignty over the Falklands remained. Argentina had re-emerged as a threat to Britain's rule over the colony but was quickly rebuffed by Thatcher and her war cabinet, with the PM later asserting, "I never had any doubt about the rightness of the decision."

The Falklands are a remote, lonely group of islands in the South Atlantic, just 400 miles off the south-eastern coast of Argentina. The combined area of the two main islands – East and West Falkland – equates to an area the size of Wales, and if you gathered together all the inhabitants – less than 3,000 – they would struggle to fill a lower-league football stadium.

"DEFEAT? I DO NOT RECOGNISE THE MEANING OF THE WORD"

History of the Falklands

Claims of discovery of the Falklands date back to the early 16th Century, but the first recorded landing there is attributed to English Captain John Strong. Sailing through Falkland Sound in 1690, he named the passage of water after Anthony Cary, 5th Viscount of Falkland. In 1765, another English Captain, John Byron, landed on Saunders Island. Ignorant of the presence of French Admiral Louis de Bougainville (who, a year before, had built a naval base on what we now know as East Falkland), Byron claimed the islands for Britain on the grounds of prior discovery. Meanwhile, in 1766, Spain came to an agreement with France that they would assume control of the islands, with de Bougainville receiving compensation for his military installations. So there arose a situation whereby Britain and Spain both inhabited the islands – oblivious to one another – and were both claiming sovereignty. Things came to a head in 1769 when British and Spanish ships crossed paths and began accusing each other of trespassing on their islands.

The first Falkland crisis occurred the following year when five Spanish ships land with 1,400 soldiers; the British are forced to leave and the threat of war loomed large. The dispute was quickly settled – allegedly by a secret agreement – but Britain evacuated the islands just three years later, due to economic pressures brought about by the American War of Independence. The islands were left largely uninhabited until 1816, when Argentina, which had just won its independence from Spain – laid claim to them due to their close proximity. Meanwhile, Britain was just emerging victorious from the Napoleonic Wars and was determined to reassert its imperialism. As part of this, it sought to reclaim the Falklands due to their potential as a strategic naval base around Cape Horn. Accordingly, in 1833, a British naval force evicted the Argentinians.

In the period of post-Second World War decolonisation, Argentina hoped that British interest in the South Atlantic would fade, with sovereignty of the Falklands being handed ▶

Margaret Thatcher and her husband Denis, during a visit to the Airtech Aerospace factory at Dunsfold in Surrey. She was photographed in December, 1982, after the British forces had secured victory over the Argentine invaders

Rex Features

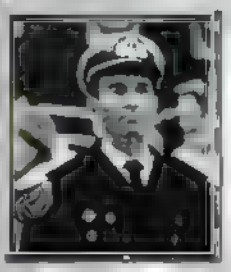
KEY FIGURES

MARGARET THATCHER

The Prime Minister of Britain was coming to the end of her term when Argentina invaded the Falklands. Her decision to use military intervention and subsequent success swayed public opinion, and she was re-elected the following year. Her name has become synonymous with the Falklands War.

LEOPOLDO GALTIERI

As the 44th President of Argentina, Galtieri ordered the invasion of the Falkland Islands due to his dwindling popularity and mass demonstrations against his rule. After the invasion's failure, he was removed from power.

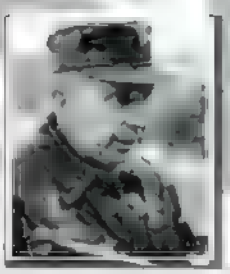


JORGE ANAYA

Some say that if it hadn't been for this man, the Falklands invasion may never have happened. Anaya was a former Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Navy and a member of the Third Military Junta, the main architect and supporter of a military invasion of the Falkland Islands.

TERENCE LEWIN

An officer of the Royal Navy, Lewin was on an official visit in New Zealand when he heard of the threat of an Argentinian invasion of the Falklands, and by the time he returned home the invasion had taken place. He was arguably the most influential member of Thatcher's War Cabinet with his in-depth knowledge of naval warfare.



CARLOS BÜSSER

Büsser was the Commander of Argentine forces during Operación Rosario. Despite the invasion's ultimate failure, he claimed that, "If we [Argentina] subsequently committed errors and lost the war, that doesn't detract from the message Argentina always sent the British government about our determination to capture the islands."

REX HUNT

As a Governor of the Falkland Islands, Hunt's name became known the world over when he initially refused to shake the hand of Büsser upon them first meeting, before surrendering to him and being imprisoned in Montevideo, Uruguay. After his return, he was Knighted for his role in the Invasion.

Rex Features

over to the South Americans as the "rightful" claimants. When this failed to materialise, a UN resolution was passed in 1965 requesting that Britain and Argentina find a peaceful solution to the problem. What followed was 17 years of hostile negotiations as diplomats sought a compromise that was satisfactory for both Argentina and Britain – not to mention the residents of the islands themselves.

It appeared at one stage that Britain wanted to rid itself of any responsibility for the islands and its settlers. Not only was the strategy of having naval bases scattered across the globe losing its efficacy, but the islands' economy was tiny – so small, in fact, that it could not even cover the costs of the 40-man Royal Marine garrison that had been stationed there since 1966. In the early 1980s, Thatcher announced the withdrawal of full British citizenship for Falkland Islanders, a decision that convinced the Argentinians further that British commitment to the islands was beginning to wear thin.

What wasn't helping the cause, however, was the devastating economic situations faced by the two countries at the beginning of the 1980's, as well as the civil unrest within Argentina. The beginning of the decade saw a period of deep economic stress in Britain and the newly-elected Conservative government was savagely cutting back on spending throughout the country, including the closing down of the Antarctic Research station on the island of South Georgia, the island that would later see the first offensive action of the war.

Argentina's ruling Military Junta

Economic downturn

Argentina in the 1980s was a desperate country with a disastrous economy. But this hadn't always been the case: in the early 20th Century, it had become one of the most advanced nations in the world. Per capita, Argentina's wealth matched that of Germany and surpassed Spain, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. But starting in the late 1920s, Argentina faced a decline in prosperity and between 1920 and 1980, it went from a rising world power to a third-world nation with soaring inflation and dwindling exports. Furthermore, there was social unrest against the Military Junta, which had been governing the country since 1976.

The Junta Government was headed by General Leopoldo Galtieri as acting President, and Admiral Jorge Anaya, the latter of whom was the main architect and supporter of a military solution to the claim over the Falkland Islands. This period saw the so-called "Dirty War", where myriad opponents to the regime disappeared without a trace. Hundreds of these people were tortured and thrown out of aircraft into shark infested waters in the South Atlantic. Death squads struck with impunity and terrorised working class union members and anybody else opposed to the corruption. As a direct result of the collapse in currency, the Junta had been forced to introduce savage cuts of its own, and it was these cuts to services and benefits that saw Argentines take to the streets early in 1982 in fierce opposition to the Junta's rule.

THIS PERIOD IN ARGENTINA SAW THE SO-CALLED "DIRTY WAR", WHERE MYRIAD OPPONENTS TO THE REGIME DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE

These demonstrations quickly got out of hand, and the Junta sensed that it was losing popularity and credibility, as well as its ability to impose law and order. Its members thought that it might be able to restore some of this by playing to their institutional strength and launching an invasion into the Falklands, which they referred to as the "Malvinas".

John Smith, historian of the Falklands Occupation, claims that due to Argentina being in a political and economic state of disarray, it wanted something to divert the attention of the people. The idea that the Junta invaded the Falklands to increase domestic legitimacy very much appears to have been the motivating factor for the decision to "recover" the islands. That the invasion actually made the Argentine public completely forget about their declining economic status or their repression during the Dirty War is highly unlikely, but it seems that the invasion produced a temporary euphoria providing some manner of justification in the eyes of a large percentage of the population. It certainly did create a unifying effect and brought together an entire nation that was rapidly falling apart.

OPPOSING FORCES

TROOPS

BRITAIN	ARGENTINA
28,000 sailors, soldiers and airmen. Of these 258 were killed and 777 wounded. More than 300 British Falklands veterans have since committed suicide.	Approximately 13,000 troops. 649 were killed plus 1,188 casualties. 11,313 men were take prisoners of war by British troops.

AIRPOWER

BRITAIN	ARGENTINA
38 Hawker Siddeley Harriers, 14 Westland Lynx Helicopters, 5 Chinook HC-1 Helicopters, 9 Westland Wasp Helicopters, 3 McDonnell Douglas Phantom FGR2s, 4 Vulcan Bombers.	4 Dassault-Breguet Super Étendard Fighters, 25 FMA IA 58 Pucarás, 10 Aermacchi MB-339s, 30 IAI Daggers, 8 English Electric Canberras, 50 Douglas A4 Skyhawks, 17 Dassault Mirages.

MISSILES

BRITAIN	ARGENTINA
Exocet Anti-Ship Missile, Sea Dart Surface-to-Air Missile, SeaSkua Anti-Ship Missile and Stinger Missiles.	Exocet Anti-Ship Missile, launched from the Super Étendard Strike Fighter, SA-7 Grail Portable Missiles, Roland Surface-to-Air Missiles.

ARMAMENT

BRITAIN	ARGENTINA
L1A1 SLR, Browning L9A1 Handgun, Lee-Enfield L42A1 Sniper Rifle, M79 Grenade Launcher, L4 Bren plus grenades and mortars.	Browning Hi-Power 9mm Handgun, M-3 Submachine Gun, L34A1 Sterling Submachine Gun, plus FMK1 anti-personnel mines.

NAVAL

BRITAIN	ARGENTINA
2 Aircraft Carriers, HMS Invincible and HMS Hermes, 2 Landing Platform Docks, 8 Destroyers, 15 Frigates, 6 submarines, plus numerous minesweepers and support ships – 127 vessels in total.	1 Aircraft Carrier, ARA Veinticinco de Mayo, 6 Destroyers, 1 Amphibious Landing Ship, 4 Corvettes, 1 Cruiser, 2 submarines, plus spy trawlers and patrol vessels – around 42 in total.

1764 TIMELINE 1766 1770 1833 1965

1764 French Admiral Louis de Bougainville sets up a naval base on East Falkland. A year later the west island is claimed by John Byron on behalf of Britain.

1766 The French and Spanish reach an agreement, whereby the French leave the island and is return the Spanish pay for the buildings.

1770 Five Spanish ships land 1,400 soldiers, forcing the British to evacuate. However the dispute is settled amicably a year later.

1833 After various claimants and attempts at settling on the islands, Britain asserts its control over the Falklands.

1965 Argentina begins contesting ownership of the islands in 1941, which continues for the next 24 years. Eventually, the UN issues a resolution for both parties to reach an agreement over the Islands' sovereignty.

Another reason for the Junta's decision to invade the Falklands as a matter of urgency was because 1983 would see the 150-year anniversary of the British occupation of the Islands. The possibility of an increased sense of British ownership might further reduce the Argentine's bargaining position. So time was of the essence as the opportunity for Argentina to lay claim to the Falklands was closing quickly.

With demonstrations breaking out on the streets of Argentina, the Junta decided to launch a full-scale invasion, before any British submarines could reach the area to enforce an Argentine evacuation. They agreed to launch the invasion at a meeting on 26 March 1982, a mission they codenamed Operación Rosario.

Tensions between Britain and Argentina had been increasing throughout March but the trigger that led to a full scale invasion was when a group of Argentine scrap metal merchants raised the Argentine flag at South Georgia, a provocative act that would later be seen as the first offensive action in the war. Governor Rex Hunt sent an urgent request for the Argentinians to remove the flag and leave the island. In response, the Argentine government assured the British that the team of merchants would be removed, doing so three days later. However, unbeknown to the British, 39 members of the Argentine team remained in place on the island.

Panic stations

Britain was also mistakenly under the belief that the territory in question at this time was South Georgia, and not the Falkland Islands themselves. The Government was still convinced that war was not inevitable at this point, and was under the impression that the Argentines were testing British resolve over the sovereignty of South Georgia, not anticipating that the Falklands might be the immediate target.

It was 31 March by the time the British discovered that the Falkland Islands were the intended target for an Argentine invasion. Panic erupted throughout political Britain as they realised what faced them: war. Britain had reason to worry because Argentina had a strong advantage militarily, partly due to Britain being a declining world power, and partly because budgetary problems had led to a decrease of funds to the Admiralty.

For Argentina, on the other hand, military budgets had been rising since 1972, and the Argentine Navy was considerably better suited to conduct naval warfare. Furthermore, the Argentines had a huge advantage in aircraft, allowing it to sortie aircraft from bases on land. But there was one area in which Argentina was at a disadvantage: training and professionalism. British troops were skilled and disciplined, giving them a slight edge in conducting military operations efficiently and successfully.

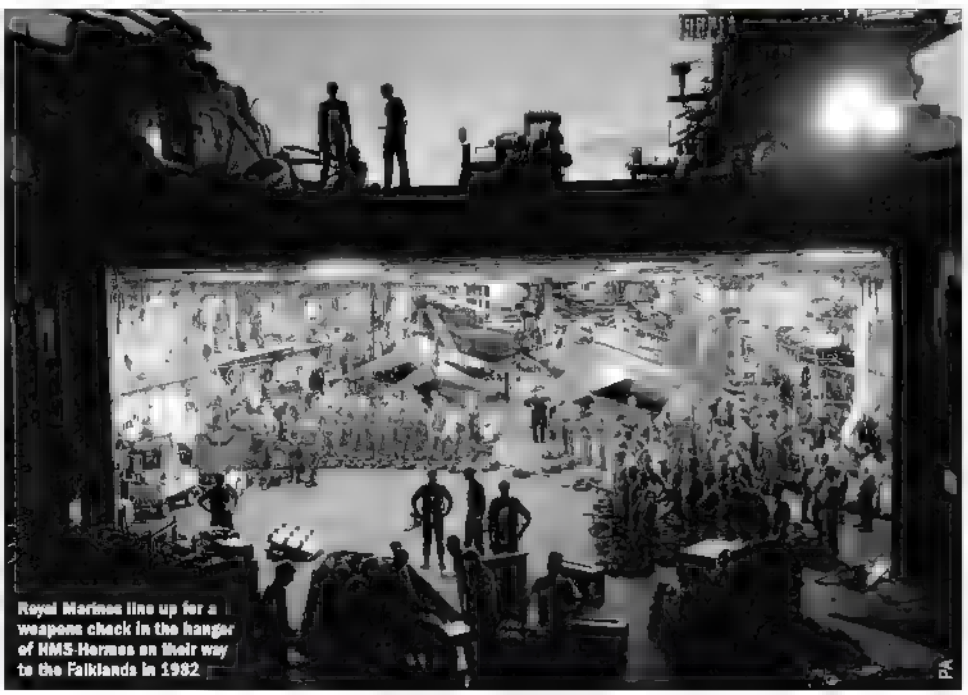
On the morning of 2 April, Governor Hunt met with Admiral Busser, Argentine Commander in charge of the invasion, and starkly reminded him, "This is British territory. You are not invited here. We don't want you here. I want you to go, and to take all your men with you now!" Admiral Büsser was not easily deterred, however, and responded, saying "I've got 800 men ashore, another 2,000 on the way. We don't want to kill any of these Marines. We thought that if we came in such numbers they would not fight. I want you to stop the action now before Marines are killed and civilians of Stanley are killed." Hunt was forced to surrender and accept the inevitability of military invasion, before being forcibly evicted from his position and imprisoned in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Two days later, on 4 April, Argentine forces captured the Falkland Islands, leading to the British deployment of a naval and amphibious task force to the area, some 8,000 miles away. The following month on 21 May, British troops landed and by 14 June had compelled the Argentine occupiers to surrender.

The truth is that the Argentinian Junta didn't actually want a war with Britain: it was hoping for a peaceful invasion that would not be met with military force. The problem was that the Junta's announcement to reclaim the Falkland Islands was met with much greater public support than it was anticipating. Caught up in a wave of patriotism, massive demonstrations took place in the streets as the Plaza de Mayo became filled with 250,000 flag-waving citizens showing their support for the regime and the invasion. One Professor said, "We are drunken with patriotic feelings, we are standing proud, because we are witnesses and participants of a rescue promised to the blood of our forebears. National joy is as wide as understandable."

As a result of this huge outpouring of support, the Junta now found itself in a difficult position: if Britain was to respond to its plans by military action, then it would be forced to pursue an unanticipated war because withdrawing in the face of such nationalistic fervour would cause the Junta to lose its last vestige of support from its domestic allies, namely the elite oligarchy, whose backing it required to continue authoritarian rule.

The decision to invade the Falkland Islands was one borne of sheer desperation as Argentina sought to reclaim its world position of 60 years before. But the loss of the war led to ever-larger protests against the military regime. It's credited with being the catalyst that drove out the military government that had been in power since 1976 and participated in the crimes of the Dirty War. It is also associated with "Thatcherism". Before the war Margaret Thatcher was not expected to serve a second term as Prime Minister, but in the euphoria that followed Britain's victory, the Conservatives rose to the top of the opinion polls and won the next year's election by a landslide. Of course, winning the war was never in doubt for the Iron Lady, who famously said, "Defeat? I do not recognise the meaning of the word."



Royal Marines line up for a weapons check in the hanger of HMS Hermes on their way to the Falklands in 1982

PA

1982

26 MARCH
Under internal pressure and with a failing economy, the Argentinian Junta meet to discuss an invasion of the Falklands. It decides to go ahead and launch Operación Rosario

2 APRIL
Governor Hunt meets with Admiral Büsser to threaten each other with military action unless one relents. Argentine forces invade the Falkland Islands, entering through the capital, Port Stanley

3-4 APRIL
The UN Security Council condemns the invasion and demands the immediate withdrawal of Argentine forces

5 APRIL
With Argentine forces now in control of the islands, the British deploy a naval and amphibious task force to the area, led by the aircraft carriers HMS Invincible and HMS Hermes

21 MAY
British forces land on the Falkland Islands, forming a beachhead at San Carlos. Less than a month later, on 14 June, the Argentine army surrenders in Port Stanley

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The First World War was notable for the advancement of specialised weapons such as the hand grenade, pictured here

Rex Features

War in the TRENCHES

First World War: The advent of war is often a key driver of new technologies, and the conflcit in Europe was no exception. **Dr Stephen Bull** describes the advances made in the development of weaponry designed for trench warfare

The commonly held belief that trench warfare and tactics remained much the same from late 1914 to early 1918 is entirely erroneous. Though casualties were undoubtedly high, advances frequently short, and lines often static, the way armies fought, and what they fought with, underwent many changes. Innovations came surprisingly quickly, and were more often delayed by the need to produce new forms of matériel and retrain troops, than by a conservative mindset of command.

The realisation that dense formations and failure to dig in quickly were cardinal errors in the face of artillery and machine guns was instantaneous. Henry Williamson recalled that on arrival in France in November 1914 his battalion practised trench digging and "artillery formation" daily. Artillery formation was described by Infantry Training, 1914, as "Small shallow columns, each on a narrow front, such as platoons or sections in fours or fives on an irregular front". Yet within weeks, it was recognised that "artillery formation" was nothing like sufficient dispersal. As one general officer explained in Notes From the Front, Part 1, of 1914:

The choice of infantry fields of fire is largely governed by the necessity for avoiding exposure to artillery fire. A field of fire of 300 to 500 yards is quite sufficient... An advance should not be made in rigid lines, but with clouds of skirmishers – 5 or 6 yards apart – thrown forward according to the ground and available cover.

A few months later a new edition of Notes was recommending "loose elastic formations", which were adapted to the ground, discouraging "rigid lines", and suggesting a distance of "8 or 10 paces" between individuals. Now, in the face of heavy casualties, orders were issued to decrease the density of attacking formations. Those of Fourth Army appeared as early as 21 August. Nevertheless this was easier said than done where reservists lacked the latest training, or there were attempts to overwhelm the enemy by sheer numbers. Because trench lines were dug explicitly to defend the occupants against rifle fire, and a static soldier, with his rifle securely rested, had a huge actual and psychological advantage over a soldier moving in the open – the problem of attacking fieldworks came to the fore very quickly.

The greatest slaughters of World War I occurred in periods that were characterised by "open" rather than "trench" warfare

Progress was swift, but sporadic, and often met with innovations by the defence which would mean that heavy casualties remained the order of the day. In this context, however, it is well worth observing that the greatest slaughters of World War I on the Western Front occurred in periods that were characterised by "open" rather than "trench" warfare. On the German ▶

side clear peak casualty figures were reached from August to November 1914, and again from March 1918 to the end of the war. French losses were at their worst in 1914 and British losses in July 1916 were catastrophic. British forces also experienced heavy losses from August to October 1918. Covering the approach of the attacker could mean one of two things: concealing him from view, or physically protecting him from the enemy's bullets. Of these, concealment from view proved easily the most useful – night raids and attack around dawn or dusk were soon common, and smoke and fog were both used.

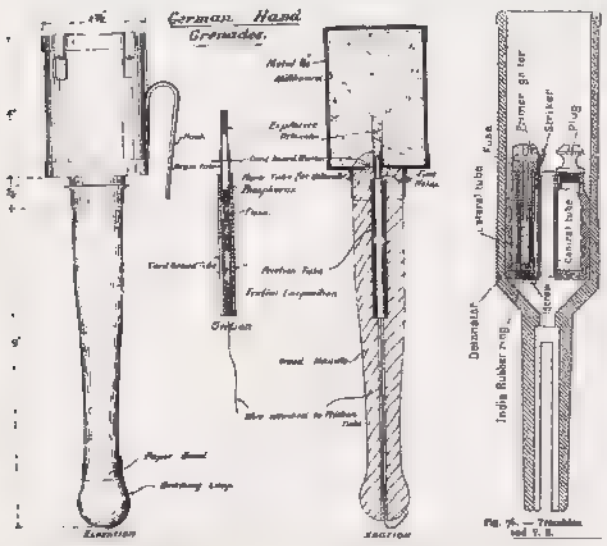
The German manual Feld-Pionierdienst (Field Pioneer Service) also suggests that advancing troops could carry filled sandbags with them, preferably under cover of darkness, and throw up a small breastwork as the first stage of cover. Metal shields were used early in the war, some of the first being detached from German machine guns. Der Spatenkrieg (The Spade War) even suggested that in the attack some cover from bursting shrapnel could be given to a prone soldier by the blade of the entrenching tool, when its handle was inserted between the pack and body. Such methods were superseded by a variety of small shields, often with prop stands to the rear. The British Munitions Design Committee was still considering "portable shields for infantry" in 1916. Medieval-looking defences on wheels had been used during the Spanish-American War, and were used again, at least attempting to hug the earth. Most of this effort was later redirected towards the provision of static loopholes.

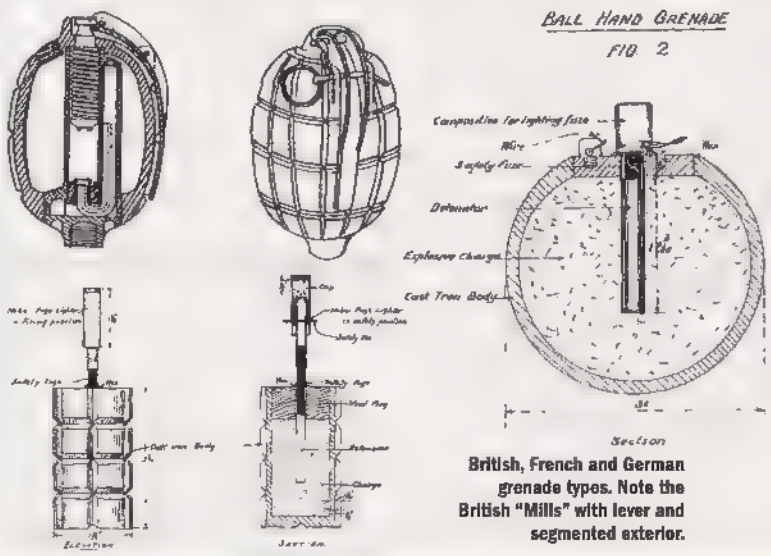
The widespread use of heavy artillery against fieldworks had been thought unlikely before the war – but developed rapidly. The only real problem was that, initially at least, heavy artillery and suitable high explosive shells and fuses were in short supply. Following shell scandals in 1915 when batteries frequently ran short this would be corrected. Another method of trench clearance that was sometimes successful, if terrain allowed, was to move a machine gun into a flanking position, then attempt to empty the enemy trench by weight of fire. The option of giving the infantry a weapon that could be used against holes in the ground was swiftly addressed by the grenade. Both the French and Germans held some stocks of ball-shaped bombs with pull-type igniters at the outbreak of war, whilst the British had small numbers of a much more technically advanced, but more difficult to manufacture, "No 1" stick grenade which exploded on impact. That grenade-armed pioneers might have a role in trench warfare had certainly been foreseen by the Germans by 1911 and soon after trenches were dug, pioneers were allotted to the infantry at the lowest level, sometimes to the extent of adding a single grenade thrower to infantry platoons where night attacks might be expected. Nevertheless in all countries grenade demand outran current production many times, the result being a scramble for new design and manufacture. The new sources of supply would be threefold: new production from home factories; extemporised production in workshops behind the lines; and bombs which the troops themselves ran up from existing scrap materials and explosives already supplied to the artillery and engineers.

Amongst the early bombs made by the troops at the front two basic designs predominated: the "Jam Tin" and the "Hairbrush", and there were equivalents on both sides of the line. Amongst the British it was the Jam Tin – sometimes

An early bomb made by British troops was the "Jam Tin" – sometimes nicknamed "Tickler's Artillery" after a well-known jam manufacturer

experimentally, on the Western Front. Such ideas lingered for a long time but were rarely efficacious for a number of reasons. To be truly bulletproof a shield had to be tough, and at least large enough to cover a man's head and shoulders. Experiment suggested that 5mm of German armour plate was required to stop a British rifle bullet at 110 yards: a decent shield therefore weighed upwards of 44lb. This weight slowed attackers, who had to be prone to take advantage of the cover, and shields attracted more fire than individuals





British, French and German grenade types. Note the British "Mills" with lever and segmented exterior.

Hand grenade

The first example of hand-thrown incendiary devices dates back to Byzantine soldiers in the 8th century. The original devices were stone or ceramic jars containing "Greek Fire" – a combination of various chemicals, including naphtha, sulphur, pine resin and quicklime. The device was wrapped in a burning cloth, and thrown. The container shattered on impact, and its contents would ignite, spreading sticky burning fluids.

Naturally the first explosive devices can be traced back to China in the 10th century, where small containers were crammed with gunpowder and detonated by a lit fuse. These were called Zhen Tian Lei – or "Sky-Shaking Thunder".

Europe caught on to the idea in the 1600s, when the term "grenade" was coined during the war between King James II of England and forces led by William of Orange. However the weapon wouldn't prove its worth until the Crimean War, where its effectiveness in trench warfare became evident.

The hand grenade as we know it today was first patented by Nils Waltersen Aasen of Norway in 1906. By the outbreak of WWI, he had 13 factories with 13,000 workers churning out grenades for French Army (the diagrams opposite are from the *French Platoon Leader's Manual* of 1917, showing the correct method for launching a grenade at the enemy).

nicknamed "Tick er's Artillery" after a well-known jam manufacturer – that predominated, which consisted of a tin can, packed with dynam te or gun cotton, with a detonator attached to a fuse that projected through the top. Fragmentation could be improved by add ng pieces of scrap metal or fragments of barbed wire.

Notes From the Front recommended practice with dummy bombs, and testing of fuses to determine burn t me. Fuses were to be long enough that the bomb could be thrown, but not so long that an a ert enemy could dive into cover or even hurl the missile back. Jam Tins were made in many different places, but one of the earliest venues that could c a m the t tle "factory" was the village of Gorre behind the Givenchy-Festubert sector where the sappers and m ners of the Ind an Meerut Division were ensconced from November 1914.

Hairbrush grenade

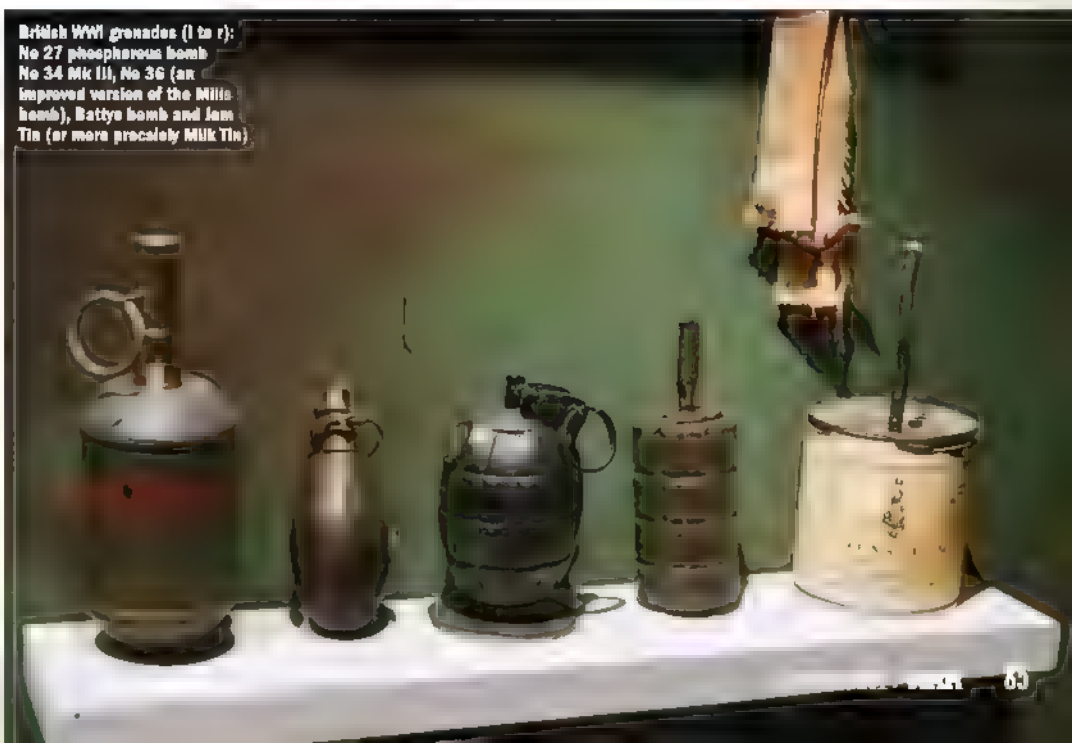
According to *Notes From the Front* the British improvised "Ha rbrush" was about 20 inches in length, with a s ab of exp osive surrounded by metal fragments within a sacking cover, attached to the wooden handle, aga n with a fuse and detonator. An Imperial War Museum variant has a tin attached to the backing board. French examples from the Les Invalides musem, and seen in photographs, vary in detail. Some have nails tied around the exp osive, others feature a slot in the wooden hand e by means of which they can be s ung from a rope around the bomber's body for easy carriage. The German emergency grenades were commonly known as Behelfsmäßige Handgranaten. Two models, approximating to the Jam Tin and Hairbrush, were depicted in the 1915 D enstunterricht des Deutschen P oniers (For Education of the German Pioneer). The tin type was about 4 inches in diameter, closed with a wooden lid, and contained fragments of iron weighing about 0.2oz. The German Ha rbrush type was 20 inches long with a large slab of explosive.

Another type devised in the winter of 1914-15 was the Brit sh "Battye" or "Bethune" bomb, produced in army workshops in France. Named after its inventor, Major Basil Condon Battye RE, it consisted of an externally segmented small cast iron cylinder fi ed w th explosive, a detonator and an ign ter, usually of the "Nobel" type. It was delivered in wooden boxes of 30. Battye was also celebrated for his efforts in bringing electric light ng and heating to dugouts.

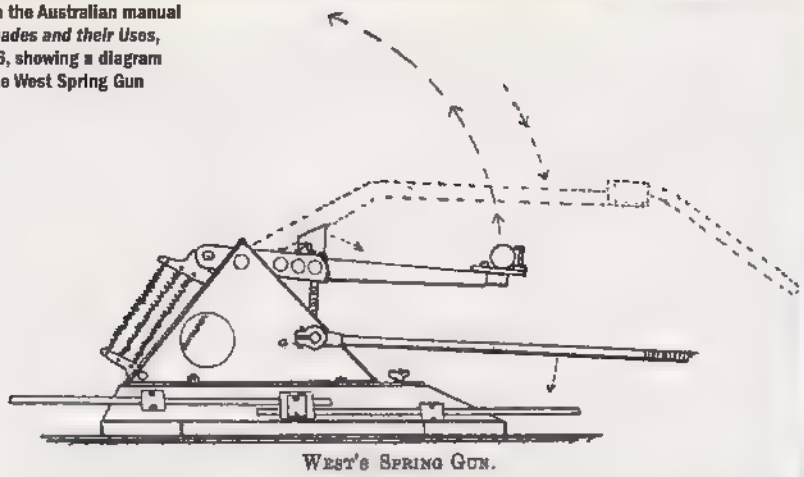
The so-called "Mexican" grenade – later known as the "No 2" – was a type of British exp ode-on-impact stick grenade seen in small numbers. Its strange name came about because it was be ng produced for a commercial contract for Mexico by the Cotton Powder Company of Faversham in Kent at the outbreak of war.

Though Fe d-Pionierd enst had envisaged that grenades would be used in the c earance of fie dworks, quite how the grenadier would achieve th s in practice was not immediate y apparent. Grenades were quickly used in raids, and grenadiers were put in the front line ahead of attacking infantry. Another tactic used at a very early stage was to open rapid fire w th other weapons, so allowing bomb throwers to creep forward, but none of these methods yet exp oited the grenade to its fullest potential. Only when groups of grenadiers worked together would it be poss ble to deve op new tactics, and this had commenced by the beginning of 1915. In *Notes on Attack and Defence* it was recommended that attacks should always be well supp ed with bombs, and that there should be "an organised plan" to keep the defenders "of a captured trench amply supplied with these m ssiles".

By May 1915 an ideal "Trench Storming Party" had been devised by the British. This was to comprise upwards of 14 men commanded by an NCO. The men of the party would be divided into four d stinct tasks: "bayonet men" to cover the group and take the lead in winkling out the opposition; grenad ers; grenade carriers; and "sandbag men" whose duty was to fo ow up, block side entrances, and fina ly form a barricade in the trench at the furthest point of the advance. To provide manpower for these storming part es the "very best, bravest and steadiest in an



British WWI grenades (l to r): No 27 phosphorous bomb, No 34 Mk III, No 36 (an improved version of the Mills bomb), Battye bomb and Jam Tin (or more precisely Milk Tin).



From the Australian manual *Grenades and their Uses*, 1916, showing a diagram of the West Spring Gun

WEST'S SPRING GUN.

The wooden frame used with this rifle grenade allows for steady shots at a consistent angle

emergency" were selected for training with a minimum of 12 NCOs an men per company taking part. By October ideas were further refined in *The Training and Employment* of Grenadiers, which noted that:

The nature of operations in the present campaign has developed the employment of rifle and hand grenades both in attack and defence to such an extent that the grenade has become one of the principal weapons of trench warfare. Every infantry soldier must, therefore, receive instructions in grenade throwing. It has been found in practice, however, that some men do not possess the temperament or the qualifications necessary to make a really efficient grenadier. For this reason in every platoon there should be a nucleus of one NCO and eight men with a higher degree of training and efficiency as grenadiers than the remainder. These men will be able either to work with the platoon or to provide a reserve of grenadiers for any special object.

A battalion "Bombing Officer" and an NCO per company were to be allotted to assist in training and to organise the supply and storage of grenades. To carry the numbers of grenades needed for bombing duties various forms of grenade waistcoat, bandolier, bag and "bomb bucket" were introduced. Flaming grenade bombers badges were initially worn unofficially, and confirmed officially by an army order of 11 October 1915. That month the "Grenadier Party" had a revised complement of nine: an NCO in command; two bayonet men; two grenade throwers; two carriers and two spare men. The bayonet men were specifically ordered to advance with magazines charged and a round "in the chamber" to protect the bombers "at all costs". The grenadiers were supposed to keep both hands free for throwing, and the carriers to keep closed up enough to pass the grenades or take the place of a wounded comrade. Spare men would carry up further supplies until required for other duties.

Once an objective was reached it was thought best to drive the enemy an additional 50 yards to put him out of grenade range, and then establish two temporary barricades or blocks across the trench. The section of the trench wall between the two obstructions could then be pulled down to create a permanent block whilst the workers were covered by other members of the team.

By mid-1915 the powerful and distinctive side-levered Mills bomb (or "No 5"), which would become synonymous with Tommy in the trenches, had entered service. The Mills bomb was an impressive performer: tests confirmed that anybody within 10 yards of its explosion was well nigh certain to be hit by its fragments, and that between 10 and 20 yards away there was a fair chance of injury. Weekly demand for Mills bombs was prodigious: half a million were wanted every seven days in July 1915, with 1.4 million being demanded in August 1916. Naturally it would be some time before such ambitious production targets were achieved, so the British Army struggled through 1915 with a whole phalanx of less efficient grenades making up the numbers.

Amongst these were not only factory-produced improvements on the Jam Tin and Hairbrush but oddities such as the friction pull "Pitcher", the "Lemon" and the "No. 15" ball grenade. The Pitcher, light and heavy versions of which became known as the Nos "13" and "14", was widely accepted as one of the most unreliable and dangerous bombs of the war: even the official *History of the Ministry of Munitions* admitted that accidents were "so numerous that they won for bombers the name of 'Suicide Club'". The Lemon bombs, Nos "6" and "7" were not as bad, but activating them required such a Herculean pull that sometimes it was like removing a cork from a bottle, and occasionally required two men working together.

Parallel developments took place amongst the Germans, and grenadiers had certainly commenced working in concert by January 1915. During the course of the year orders were issued that "all infantrymen and pioneers must be trained in bombing just as thoroughly as they are trained with the rifle". Soon the Handgranatentrupp of half a dozen men was being promoted for both offensive and defensive actions. In an attack, the assault groups moved as small scattered parties, not lines, and entered the enemy works as swiftly as possible. Once there they rolled up the line, "bombing" along the trench, throwing grenades over the traverses

The Mills bomb was an impressive performer: tests confirmed that anybody within 10 yards of was certain to be hit by its fragments

Light machine guns

While Germany could claim leads in the fields of the grenade, mortar and flamethrower, the British had a definitive head start with the machine gun. The Lewis gun was designed by an American before the war and was under production in Birmingham by August 1914. The French had quickly come to the conclusion that light machine weapons would be useful for 'walking fire', in which a two-man team could fire on the move. Unfortunately it was some time before the 1915 model French Chauchat could be made in quantity, and the gun itself proved unreliable. At the eleventh hour, US forces received what was arguably one of the best light support weapons, the Browning automatic rifle, or "BAR". Weighing 22lb it was lighter than the Lewis gun, and fired from a 20-round box magazine. Despite some issues, it was capable of going where platoons and squads went and when it arrived in the summer of 1918 it was more than a match for anything else used in this role.

and forming "blocks" using sandbags, shields, spades and anything else that members of the party carried with them. On the defence the Handgranatentrupp went into action immediately and unbidden by higher authority, as was illustrated by orders issued to 235th Reserve Infantry in December 1915:

All men of the party carry their rifles slung, bayonets fixed and daggers ready, with the exception of the two leaders, who do not carry rifles. The latter may carry as many grenades as they can conveniently handle and should if possible be armed with pistols. The commander, similarly armed, follows the two leading men... The remaining three men follow the others one traverse to the rear; they keep within sight of their commander, and carry as many grenades as possible. The two leading men advance along the trench in a crouching posture, so that the commander can fire over them. The interval between traverses is crossed at a rush.

By early 1916 the Handgranatentrupp was further refined so that it comprised eight men plus a leader. The eight could be broken down into two subsections of four, with the lead portion of the Gruppe composed of two "throwers", with two "carriers" in support. When necessary a four threw grenades, creating short but heavy showers of bombs. To deal with a blockhouse or machine gun post two members of the lead team would adopt sniping positions, keeping down the heads of the defenders whilst the remainder worked their way around the objective using shell holes or any other handy cover. Finally they would rush the position from unexpected angles.

By the middle of the war many commanders on both sides were becoming concerned that their men had gone "bomb mad" – by which they meant that they tended to use bombs rather than rifles. Injunctions were issued demanding that skills with the rifle should be strictly maintained.

Being "bombed" was an almost uniquely terrifying experience, and one which Lieutenant Symons of the 2/8th Worcesters barely survived when caught out in No Man's Land: "The first thing I knew about it was a rifle going off point blank and I turned round and cursed the sniper who was with me as I thought he had let off his rifle. As I turned I saw the earth at his feet kick up and then a bullet came at my feet and I looked and saw a Hun at handshake distance firing. I was in a shell hole almost instantaneously. But the second I got in I saw a hand grenade just falling in my hole so I dashed off and got into another five yards further away. As I ran they threw six at me which burst in a shower all round and I felt my left hand go numb as I fell into the crater and when I looked at it there was only a red pulp with splinters of bones and tendons in it on the end of my arm... I got out my field dressing and poured iodine over the jelly and put on the dressings as well as I could and then bound my arm to my stick with my tie. As soon as this was done I ate my maps with all the HQs marked on them."

Ammunition for the 2inch trench mortar, or "toffee apples" being brought up the Somme

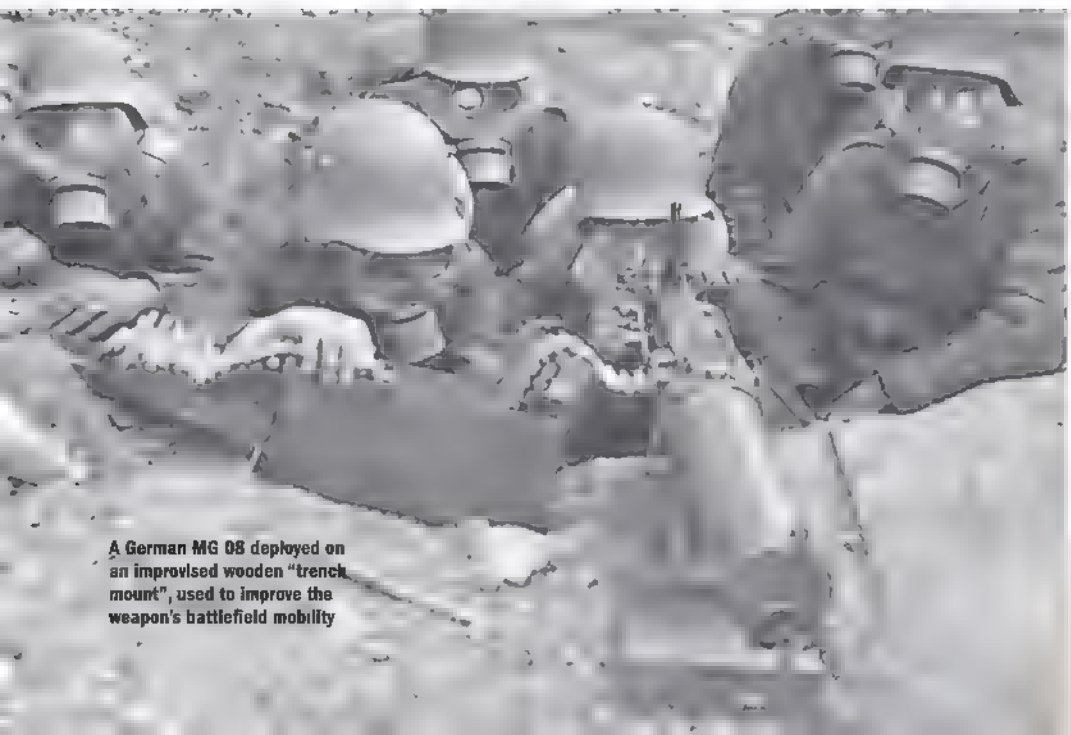
Grenade launchers

Whilst grenades in the hands of small teams were the first weapons to find chinks in the tyranny of lines and trenches, many devices were tried with greater or lesser success. Trench mortars, catapults and rifle grenades all developed rapidly during the first 18 months of the war. It was also true that all applied the same basic principle of lobbing a missile at a high angle, so that it would fall into defensive works. The payload of the bomb and its detonator were contained in a cylinder on the end of a rod. The rod was slid into the barrel of the service rifle, which was loaded with a special blank cartridge. The pressure behind the rod forced the grenade out of the rifle at speed and the grenade shot off towards the enemy. Being nose heavy the end bearing the percussion device hit the ground first and exploded the grenade.

The German rifle grenades were the models 1913 and 1914 and the main British type the "J" Pattern, later known as the "No 3". Though such grenades were fairly local in their effects the impact could be increased by firing them off in volleys, perhaps from stands set to predetermined angles within the trench system. The "No 3" was powerful enough to dissolve into a cloud of fragments on detonation likely to cause serious injury or death to anyone within a circle 10 feet in diameter, and quite a few injuries well beyond that range.

By 1916 Mills bombs were adapted for rifle projection, first with the addition of a rod, and finally by means of a cylindrical "discharger". The French, Germans and Americans all adopted rifle grenades projected from dischargers or cups later in the war. The French model, also used by US forces, was the "Vivien Bessière", a small grenade fired from a muzzle attachment or "tromblon". The cartridge used to launch the bomb was a bulleted round which passed through a channel in the grenade and ignited its fuse as it was launched. Though it was not adopted by the British Army the "VB" grenade received its UK patent in January 1916.

The mortar was a weapon of surprising antiquity, having been in existence since about 1500. Interest in the development of modern "trench mortars" stemmed from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. It was the Germans who were most alert to the possibilities, noting how mortars might be applied to French ▶

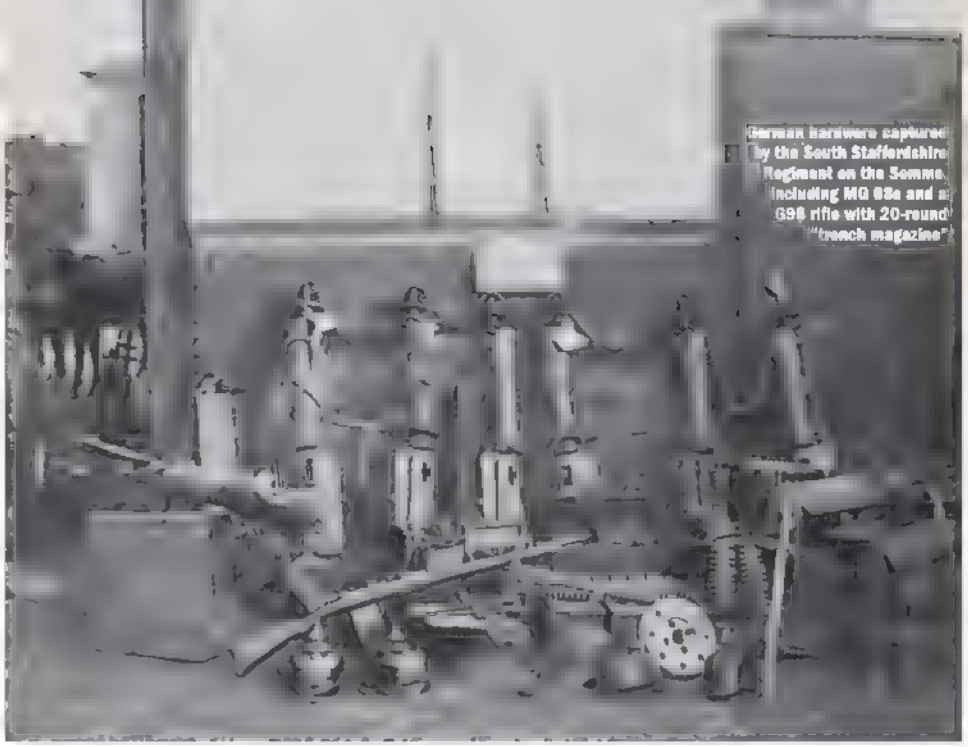


A German MG 08 deployed on an improvised wooden "trench mount", used to improve the weapon's battlefield mobility

fortifications in the future. A specification was therefore issued for the development of a Minenwerfer throwing a demolition charge of 110lb or greater; capable of accurate fire to at least 330 yards; plus combining compactness with the least possible weight.

The first heavy trench mortars were deployed with German pioneers in 1910. Despite this lead even the Germans could field only 190 weapons at the outbreak of war. The result was the rapid development and deployment of several different stopgap mortars. These included the so-called "Earth Mortar" which was a tube buried in the ground for lobbing a 52lb sheet steel projectile, the Albrecht with its wooden tube made in three calibres; and the Iko Flüge minenwerfer. The Iko was a particularly unwieldy smooth-bored beast with a massive base plate, throwing a 220lb projectile about 1,090 yards. At the other end of the scale was the little Lanz mortar capable of projecting 9lb shells about 440 yards.

Being on the receiving end of "Minnie" fire was a terrifying and occasionally surreal experience. The mortar was usually concealed in a pit, and the sound of its discharge was less impressive than the bark or roar of ordinary artillery. The bombs were predominantly large but, being projected at high trajectories and relatively low velocities, could sometimes be seen tumbling or wobbling towards the ground through a serene arc. The blast created by large missiles was prodigious. For destroying all but deep dugouts and collapsing sections of trench nothing but the heaviest artillery could equal the effect. As George Coppard of the Machine Gun Corps recalled, "men just disappeared and no one saw them go". German soldier Karl Josenhans was uncomfortably close as he watched Minenwerfer bombs fall onto the French lines:



German hardware captured by the South Staffordshire Regiment on the Somme, including MG 08s and a G98 rifle with 20-round "trench magazine"

"One murderous instrument with which we have the advantage is the big trench mortar. They hurl huge shells about a thousand feet into the air and they fall almost vertically .. Earth and branches are flung into the air to the height of a house, and although the shells fell 80 yards away from us, the ground under us shook. During the explosions I was looking through a periscope into the French trench opposite and could see terrified men running away to the rear. But somebody was evidently standing behind them with a revolver, for one after another they came crawling back again. This war is simply a matter of hounding men to death, and that is a degrading business."

The bombs, projected at high trajectories and relatively low velocities, could be seen tumbling or wobbling towards the ground in a serene arc

By 1916 German efforts focused on three standard models: a light 7.5cm, medium 17cm and heavy 25cm mortar. The following year it proved possible to replace whatever mortars were then held by the infantry with four "new model" 7.5cm light Minenwerfer per battalion, all capable of being shifted in wheeled carriages.

British trench mortars got off to a comparatively slow start, and not until October 1914 did Field Marshal French make a specific request for "some special form of artillery" suitable for trench destruction. So it was that the British struggled for almost a year with inadequate numbers of inefficient, and often dangerous, stopgaps. The 5inch "Trench Howitzer" that materialised in December was dismissed as both unwieldy and inaccurate, and a better Vickers Pattern, accepted in March 1915, was available only in pitiful numbers.

Dramatic improvements commenced in mid-1915 with the first arrivals of the 2inch "Trench Howitzer", colloquially known as the "Toffee Apple" bomb-thrower. The key to the weapon was its projectile, a large spherical bomb mounted on a steel stick. The bomb weighed 50lb and could be thrown 500 yards.

A devastating salvo of Toffee Apples was witnessed by Wyn Griffith of the Royal Welch Fusiliers: "A pop, and then a black ball went soaring up, spinning round as it went through the air slowly; more pops and more queer birds against the sky. A stutter of terrific detonations

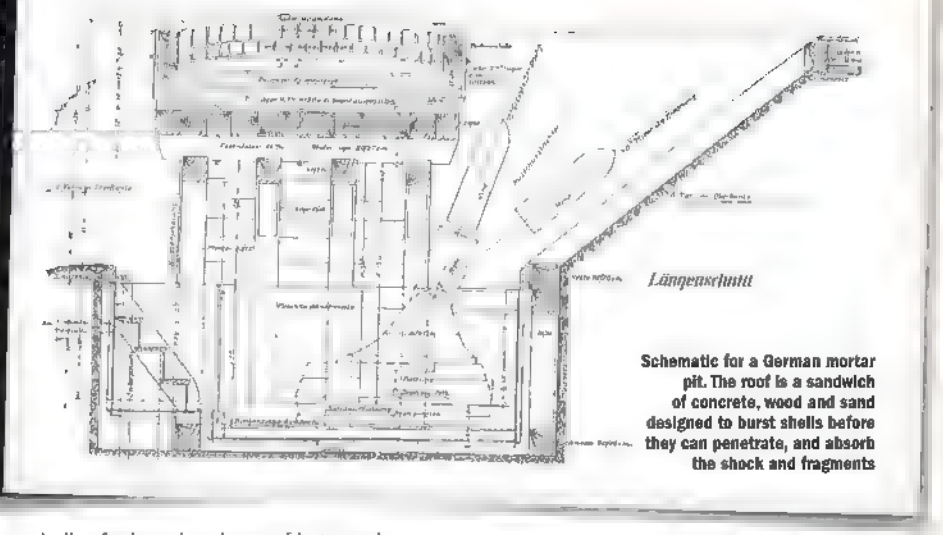
A selection of WWI automatic weapons. The small gun left of centre is the MP 18, the first true submachine gun

Bricks and mortar

The mortar proved to be an especially effective weapon during the war. This small, stumpy weapon is designed to fire at a steep angle – often 45 degrees or more – so that the projectile falls almost vertically on the enemy. As such, its ability to drop into trenches, made it much-feared among the troops. The other advantages are that it can be fired from the relative safety of the trench, or a purpose built mortar pit, avoiding exposure to gunfire. The mortar itself is also considerably lighter and has better mobility than traditional artillery pieces.

Germany had a head start on the allies at the beginning of the war, after they had witnessed its effects during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. They began stockpiling mortars in readiness for use against France's fortresses, and had around 150 units by the start of the war.

Both France and Britain were caught unawares by Germany's use of the mortar, causing France to dust off its own century-old Napoleonic-era devices. Britain, although slow to catch on to the idea, did eventually accept the weapon and improve its design. The smooth-bore, 3-inch Stokes mortar is generally regarded as the best of the mortars in use during World War I.

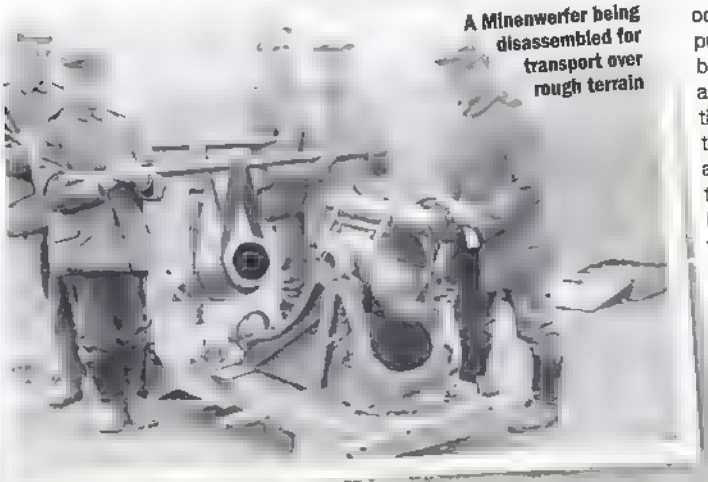


Schematic for a German mortar pit. The roof is a sandwich of concrete, wood and sand designed to burst shells before they can penetrate, and absorb the shock and fragments

seemed to shake the air and the ground, sandbags and bits of timber soared up slowly, and fell in a calm deliberate way. In the silence that followed the explosions, an angry voice called out in English, across No Man's Land, 'You bloody Welsh Murderers'".

At the end of 1915 the French 9.45inch heavy 'flying pig' design was also added to the British inventory. Parallel work in the UK also led to the development of the remarkable Stokes mortar The Stokes was simple, consisting essentially of a barrel and pair of legs, and a bomb that slid into the mortar, tail first. It met four vital criteria: simplicity, speed, lightness and ease of setting up. It was introduced in 1916 and within a year had proved its efficiency. Its basic design has informed that of mortars the world over, ever since

The trench mortars of both friend and foe were distinctly unloved by the front line infantryman, not least because one of their most favoured tactics was to displace before any retaliation occurred. As C. J. Arthur put it: "The trench mortar batteries used to come up and let off a few rounds, then go back. We were left to patch up the trenches after the usual replies from the "minnie" brigade. Those Minenwerfers! I shall never forget their soul-destroying qualities. To be hit by something you could not see was not too bad, but to see something coming, sufficient to blow a crater of 15 feet diameter and not know which way to go to avoid it, was enough to destroy the nerve of a suit of armour. You can imagine, therefore, how decidedly unpopular the trench mortar batteries became".



A Minenwerfer being disassembled for transport over rough terrain

It is perhaps surprising that the catapult, siege weapon of the ancients, should have gained a new lease of life early in World War I. That it did was due at least in part to the early lack of more modern equipments such as mortars and rifle grenades. One built by the Cambridgeshire Regiment in Ploegsteert Wood was a direct copy of a Roman machine, inspired by the classical scholarship of a Cambridge professor A few others depended on elasticity, being not unlike overgrown schoolboys' catapults Most threw some form of grenade, or an extemporised Jam Tin In addition to being relatively easy to produce these catapults had the not inconsiderable advantage of being comparatively quiet. Conversely they were not always easy to mount and conceal, had relatively short range, and were quickly outclassed by better weapons

Some catapults were local improvisations or inventions that nevr got much beyond the experimental. Various devices using the leaf springs of lorries and assortments of bicycle parts saw widespread use. Amongst these were the French Sauterelle, and the Leach catapult and West Spring Gun in British service. The Leach was a large fork and employed rubber springs plus a sling to hold the projectile Amazingly Leach catapults were issued on a scale of 20 per division in 1915

The West Spring Gun, issued on the same scale as the Leach, relied on an arm whose vicious forward and upward flick was powered by ▶

a battery of steel springs. Downward pressure on a cocking lever by two or three men set the mechanism. It could be carried into position by stretcher-like handles, and required sandbags on its base to prevent it bucking crazily on discharge. Guy Chapman thought that the West was likely to decapitate its user, and its dangerous reputation was certainly confirmed by a November 1915 report in the *144th Brigade War Diary: Lieutenant Schwalm, 6th Glosters, Brigade Grenadier Officer, was killed whilst firing the West bomb thrower, his foot slipped and his head was hit by the arm of the machine, after the spring had been released. This is not the first accident which has occurred with this machine, a very cumbersome one from which the results obtained are no means commensurate with the dangers incurred by the user and the difficulty in manoeuvring it.*

Experimentation with the weird and wonderful continued even after the demise of the West and Leach. In June 1916 the Munitions Design Committee looked at a "Rotary Apparatus for Throwing Grenades" designed by a Sergeant Day. This operated on the centrifugal principle, and once cranked up to speed the user consulted a speedometer which indicated how far the bomb would fly on release. Though the machine was deemed portable, and a test determined that grenades could be flung fairly accurately to 150 yards, it was decided that the weapon was "unsuited to the service". Another eight armed centrifugal device was also rejected by the same sitting of the Committee.

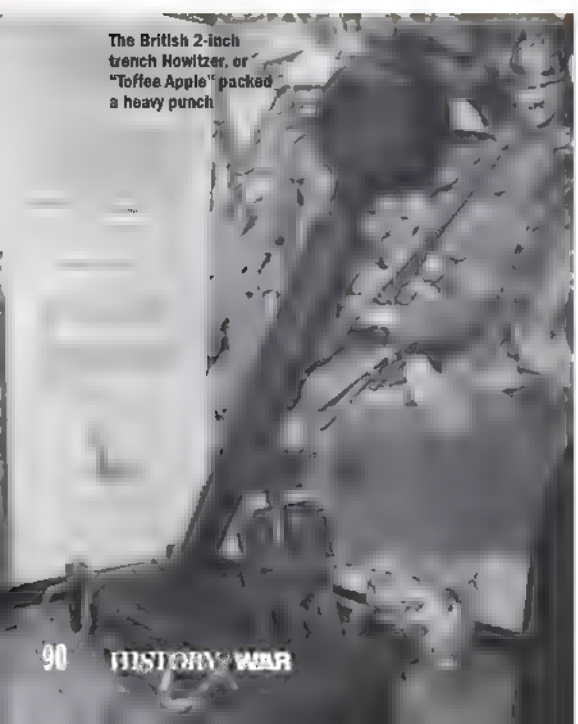
The "new type" 7.5cm Minenwerfer could fire an 11lb shell over half a mile

Flamethrowers

Flame weapons had existed since classical times – but a portable, practical device for the battlefield had only been perfected in Germany in the years leading up to war. The first Flammenwerfer attack was made against the French at Malancourt in February 1915. Before long "liquid fire" was also turned on the British at Hooge. In part the flamethrower was a terror weapon – since it was very short range and for many it was totally demoralising – but not all were daunted. Captain Hitchcock reported that the Leinsters were taught to aim specifically at those carrying the Flammenwerfer tanks, who had a heavy burden to carry, and could on occasion ignite with "a colossal burst". Later the 2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers were treated to a demonstration with a captured flame-thrower, which they found more amusing than expected because, "its premature operation scorched some of the staff".

An eyewitness of a flame attack was Guy Chapman at Third Ypres: "The enemy were attacking under cover of Flammenwerfer, hose pipes leading to petrol tanks carried on the backs of men. When the nozzles were lighted, they threw out a roaring, hissing flame 20 or 30 feet long, swelling at the end to an oily rose, 6 feet in diameter. Under protection of these hideous weapons, the enemy surrounded the advance pillbox, stormed it and killed the garrison."

The Leinsters were taught to aim specifically at those carrying the Flammenwerfer tanks, who could on occasion ignite with "a colossal burst"


The British 2-inch trench Howitzer, or "Toffee Apple" packed a heavy punch

Remarkably the German flame attack soon generated its own very specific modus operandi. As outlined in late 1915 the textbook assault began with the blowing of charges to create holes in the barbed wire, then on the sound of a siren or whistle the discharge of large, static flame-throwers. The conflagration from these fixed devices was vicious, but lasted only a minute, at the end of which the attackers would swarm from their trenches – often up short ladders that had been specially positioned.

Taught that small amounts of burning fuel left on the ground posed no serious threat they would hurry on before the defenders had a chance to react. The first wave were the "assaulting party" with man pack flamethrowers, grenades, rifles with fixed bayonets and engineers with charges for blowing strong points or stubborn wire. The men would be dressed in "assault order", and have with them at least two grenades and 200 rounds of ammunition. These were followed by a "consolidating party" whose job was to hold the trenches captured. In the rear followed a "carrying party", to bring up grenades, ammunition and other stores, and the "communication trench construction party" whose much longer and laborious task was to connect the works captured with existing saps.

As the attack unfolded artillery and mortars would open fire, shelling selected positions – thus supporting the assault as it unfolded rather than giving the enemy prior warning.

Captain P. Christison of 6th Cameron Highlanders faced the peril of the flamethrower at the Battle of Passchendaele: "There was no immediate counter-attack, but towards dusk one came in – headed by flamethrowers to add to our misery. This was a new one. Our rifles and light machine guns were now useless, being gummed up with mud, and we had to hurl grenades and use pick handles in close combat. One had no time to feel frightened it all happened so quickly. I saw a large Hun about to aim his flamethrower in my direction and Company Sergeant Major Adams with great presence of mind fired his Verey pistol at the man... The round hit the flamethrower and with a scream the man collapsed in a sheet of flame."

In terms of producing flame weapons the Allied response was patchy. The French learned the techniques most quickly, and a patent for a French portable flamethrower was lodged by March 1915. The British concentrated on fixed flame projectors. An American devised a bizarre "flaming bayonet", which, perhaps fortunately, never reached the battlefield. But as so often happened, response then met with counter response as the Germans issued instructions that their own artillery should be concentrated wherever possible on enemy flame projectors, whilst the infantry focused on attempting "to shoot the men carrying the small apparatus", whose dangerous burdens would then become a hindrance to the men around them.

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History Of War casts its eye over the military-based **books, DVDs and games** that may or may not convince you to part with your cash this month

D-DAY – THE LAST OF THE LIBERATORS

Robin Savage *Heiron & Company* **RRP £25**

★★★★★

June the 6th is a date that no one should ever forget. No one should not be told about it, nor be allowed to skirt over its significance, for on that day 70 years ago the Allies invaded the beaches of Normandy in a campaign that would turn the Second World War on its head.

Of course, this picture-led tome will be one of many to hit the shelves as this poignant anniversary is marked, but what will surely separate this one from the others are the photographs within, and the unique access the photographer was granted in order to take them.

As the old adage goes, "A picture paints a thousand words," and Robin Savage – whose portraits these are – is to be congratulated, for in every single case here, they most certainly do.

Extracted from previous D-Day anniversaries, they are immediately accessible. You cannot fail but be impressed by these humbling images, which provide a close, personal and human perspective – all too-easily forgotten – on a grossly inhuman cost and the loss of so many young lives.

British veterans – comrades-in-arms – stand proud, their achievements proudly badged to their chests, close to (or, indeed, in) the spots where they saw action or were wounded. The horrors of battle are still etched on their faces.

After a brief introduction that sets the scene, the book is broken down into four sections: Airborne, Sword, Juno and Gold, each one given its own space to inform the reader of a brief history and the role it played.

Savage uses a language that is informative and to the point – there is no need for puff and fleshing out here – and does a commendable job in giving a delicious first taste of the heroics ahead to even the most novice and uninformed of reader. For example, in Sword, we discover that, as the easternmost of the five invasion beaches, Caen's capture was the main objective for the invasion forces that landed there.

Yes, the book would've benefited from the accounts being retold in the first person but, as previously stated, it's the photographs themselves – of 33 veterans – that conjure up the most provoking thoughts. Which is exactly how it should be. It's clear from them that Savage enjoyed immensely his moments with the liberators – no matter how brief – and is eternally grateful. That day in June is a time of personal remembrance and reflection and, in his portraits, Savage ensures that there's a dignity that shines through.

The bravery and sacrifice of this generation of young men and women must never be forgotten – and this pictorial ensures that this will remain the case for another generation or two at least. **Louis Isaac**

That day in June is a time of personal reflection, and in his portraits, Savage ensures that dignity shines through

WAR REPORT: BBC DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTLINE 1944-1945

John Simpson (foreword) *BBC Books* **RRP £25**

★★★★

Prior to writing reviews for *History Of War*, I had a fairly lengthy spell working for a very successful men's lifestyle magazine. Now, you may be wondering how such an occupation qualifies me to write authoritatively on matters military, but during the lifespan of that particular publication, several of our team – including this particular reviewer – were given the opportunity to travel to Iraq and Afghanistan during those respective conflicts, and experience first-hand what war is like (not very nice, as it turns out) and also the nature of the men and women who fight it (generally rather nicer).

Over the course of a decade or so, the magazine received hundreds upon hundreds of "military blues" – handwritten letters from soldiers on the front line on made-for-purpose pastel-blue military-issue sealable envelopes. The resultant archive makes for fascinating reading, documenting as it does the everyday life, hopes, fears, experiences and tragedies of the average soldier, many of whom were barely out of their teens and experiencing a life away from home for the first time. To put that another way, what those letters go to show is that the most honest truth about the war experience comes from those sitting in the furthest flung outposts; those who feel the furthest from the nest.

In 1944, as the Second World War began to tilt inexorably in the favour of the Allied forces, the BBC did something unprecedented. After it became apparent that the D-Day landings in Normandy on 6 June had chalked up a monumental victory, the broadcaster parachuted in a team of young reporters – including a youthful Richard Dimbleby – who would go on to define the template of the "embedded" reporter for the next 70 years and counting. These men would remain at the very tip of the Allied thrust towards Berlin and, over the course of the next year or so, their daily dispatches would become War Report, effectively the most accurate and up-to-date information source for the millions back home, praying for this most devastating of conflicts to end and for their loves ones to be returned

The exhilaration of young reporters fully aware that they are being tasked to document the unfolding of a globally shared narrative is palpable throughout the book

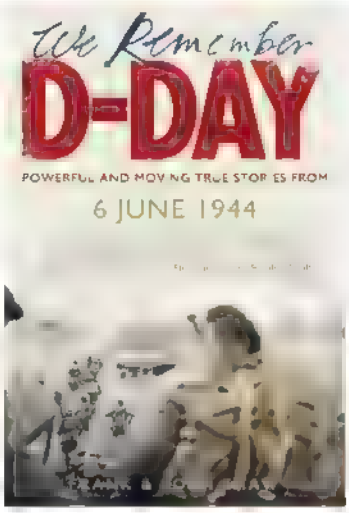
This weighty collection of those dispatches makes for, as one might expect, utterly fascinating reading on a micro and macro level. The exhilaration of young reporters fully aware that they are being tasked to document the unfolding of a globally shared narrative is palpable throughout, as is their aghast as they tell of the inevitable horrors they are forced to recount.

Journalism as a whole owes these men a huge debt of gratitude, as they effectively changed the way that war is reported on. And you owe it to yourself to buy this slab of history. **Pete Cashmore**

WE REMEMBER D-DAY

Frank & Joan Shaw *Ebury Press* **RRP £8.99**

★★★★★



With the centenary of the beginning of the Great War receiving so much media attention, some may have forgotten that 2014 also marks the 70th anniversary of D-Day. The re-publication of *We Remember D-Day* by Frank and Joan Shaw ensures that this momentous and strategic turning point of WWII remains in the public consciousness.

On 6 June 1944, thousands of warships, landing craft and combat aircraft formed part of the biggest invasion force ever seen. More than 150,000 men landed that day and, thanks to the meticulousness of the authors, many of their stories survive to serve as testament to the indomitable Allied spirit.

Twenty years ago, Frank and Joan wrote to 700 local newspapers across Britain, asking for people's memories of the war, and the more than 130 recollections of D-Day that make up this book are a mere fraction of the replies they received. There are tales of anticipation turning to horror as landing crafts neared French beaches and came under enemy fire; stories from pilots who saw the devastation of war from above; descriptions of helplessness as one's comrades were cut down; and harrowing accounts of German atrocities against civilians.

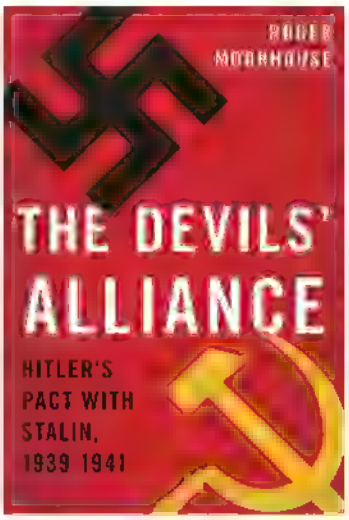
There are, however, lighter stories. One prisoner of war recalls hearing about the invasion with his inmates on a hidden radio; within minutes, the whole camp was dancing the conga, much to the bewilderment of the guards.

For anyone interested in the realities of warfare, delving into this book puts them amongst the action with all the sights, sounds and smells described by people who were actually there. **Simon Green**

THE DEVILS' ALLIANCE

Roger Moorhouse *The Bodley Head* **RRP £25**

★★★★★



It's almost impossible to imagine – and, indeed, all but forgotten – that when Hitler invaded Poland from the west in September 1939, Stalin also invaded the country from the east. The two bitter ideological rivals had made a bizarre pact in Moscow that summer, which superficially committed the two regimes to remain at peace with one another, but secretly carved up chunks of Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and parts of Scandinavia before a shot had even been fired.

The agreement, known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, was named after the two nations' respective foreign ministers who drew it up, and was held for two dramatic years. It was eventually broken by Hitler in June 1941 when he launched Operation Barbarossa and sent a 3.5-million man army swarming over the border into the Soviet Union in what remains the largest military operation in human history.

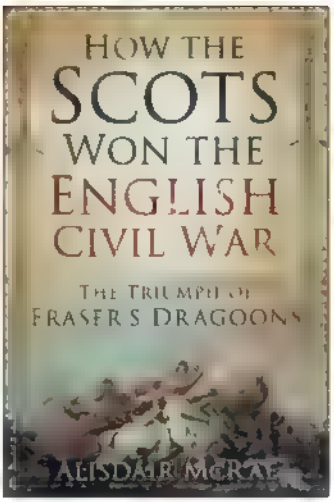
Roger Moorhouse's definitive book on the subject, which blends eyewitness accounts with an authoritative master narrative, tells the complete story of this iniquitous agreement, the Machiavellian motives behind it and the reasons for its collapse. Crucially, the author also shines a light on the forgotten fate of around 75 million Eastern Europeans whose lives were changed forever by the insane ambitions of both Hitler and Stalin.

The Devils' Alliance is not just a good book, it's an important one, making a significant contribution to our understanding of the two worst dictators of the 20th Century, and the calamitous conflict they both had a hand in causing. **Nick Soldinger**

HOW THE SCOTS WON THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

Alisdair McRae
The History Press **RRP £14.99**

★★★★



The English Civil War is usually considered to have been a uniquely English affair, without external influences. However, a 30-year trawl through all available sources by Scottish historian Alisdair McRae has resulted in a challenging book that sets out to prove that the first stage of the war (1642-46) was, in fact, won for Parliament against Charles with a great deal of assistance from the Scots.

McRae's book – subtitled "The Triumph Of Fraser's Dragoons" – focuses mainly on the only dragoon unit in Lord Leven's Scottish Army, but also looks at the Army of the Covenant as a whole, and the roles of the Marquis of Montrose and King Charles himself.

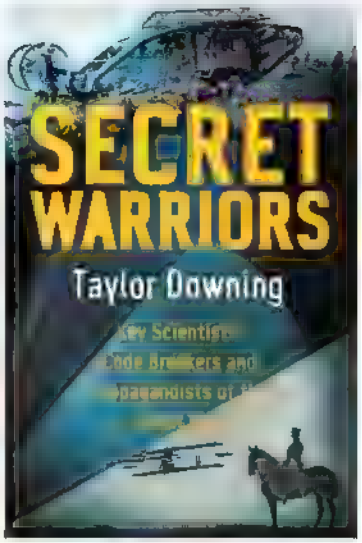
McRae compares the role of the Scots to that of the Americans in both World Wars – coming to the fight late, but with such a powerful army that the war ended much sooner than it would have done had they not arrived. He also, controversially, compares the Army of the Covenant to today's Afghan fighters, doing God's work under the orders of fanatical clerics.

Full of gory details of the battles that took place during the conflict, and of the slaughter of women and children at Philiphaugh, as well as detailed accounts of the sieges of Newcastle, Marston Moor and Newark, this book would benefit from more detailed maps and fewer endless lists of soldiers' pay, food and equipment entitlements. However, for those who want an in-depth analysis of this period, this book might well turn their perception of the Civil War on its head. **Simon Green**

SECRET WARRIORS

Taylor Downing *Little, Brown* **RRP £20**

★★★★★



It's tragic but true that war benefits humanity through the huge technological advances that are often made during conflicts, as nations seek to annihilate each other with ever greater efficiency.

The First World War was the first truly industrialised conflict, so it's perhaps not surprising to discover in Taylor Downing's *Secret Warriors* that some of the most important scientific developments of the 20th Century came about as a result of that holocaust. The book looks at five distinct groups of "boffins" (a phrase not actually coined until World War Two) who worked variously in aviation, code-breaking, engineering, chemistry, medicine and the media, and shows how the conflict both fed and fed off innovation in all of these areas.

One revelation to emerge is the part Winston Churchill played in these developments. His support for boffins and eccentric scientific solutions during the Second World War is well documented, but it clearly stemmed from his earlier stint as a wartime decision-maker. For example, while serving as the first Lord of the Admiralty in 1914, he'd been instrumental in the establishment of Room 40 – Britain's First World War code-breaking facility and the forerunner of Bletchley Park. Later, when he re-emerged from self-imposed exile in the trenches, he again led the technological charge as Minister of Munitions when he created the Chemical Warfare Committee.

Secret Warriors is a compelling insight into the role intellectuals can play in the business of war, and how they did so during the 1914-18 conflict. **Nick Soldinger**

THE TANK WAR

Mark Urban *Abacus Publishing* **RRP £9.99**

★★★★

Mark Urban has used previously unseen diary extracts, archive material and interviews with surviving soldiers to tell the story of members of the 5th Royal Tank Regiment – an outfit of "normal, if highly professional, men who did extraordinary things".

The 5th Tanks were on the front line from the French campaign in 1940, through North Africa and Italy, to Germany in 1945. Despite the early inadequacies of the Royal Armoured Corps in 1939, Urban argues that the 5th RTR laid the groundwork for the British Army to become a mechanised, experienced force without which the war would not have been won.

Graphic recounts of battles from the men who fought them present the stark reality of their lives, question the popular image of the stoical Tommy and show instead that many soldiers – while brave and dedicated – were often disrespectful of their superiors, sometimes disillusioned and occasionally very afraid. **Simon Green**

ARCTIC AIRMEN

Ernest Schofield & Roy Nesbitt
The History Press
RRP £14.99

★★★★★

In this remarkable book, co-author Ernest Schofield recounts his time as a navigator on a Catalina flying boat that flew a series of secret, long-range missions to the High Arctic and Russia throughout 1942. These missions ranged from rescuing an intelligence officer who'd become stranded on the ice, to flying 24-hour-long sorties gathering data about weather patterns, ice floes and German ops in the area to ensure that Britain's supply convoys to Russia could dodge icebergs, storms and U-boats.

The work was as complex as it was dangerous. Operating so far north meant that Schofield and his team were not only working in constant daylight, but navigating without a compass – they don't work beyond the 80th parallel. This made them vulnerable not only to attack from enemy positions, but also to getting lost in what is the most inhospitable environment on earth. **Nick Soldinger**

MUD, BLOOD AND BULLETS

Edward Rowbotham *The History Press*
RRP £3.99

★★★★½

The phrase "essential reading" is bandied about a lot when it comes to books these days. So when I saw that very phrase on the cover of this rather diminutive tome the memoirs of Midlands coal miner Edward Rowbotham, who was drafted into the newly formed Machine Gun Corps during the Great War – I confess that I groaned slightly. However, within just a few pages, I was hooked on Rowbotham's simple, almost matter-of-fact telling of what is an engrossing and fascinating story.

Mud, Blood And Bullets follows his life from his days as a General Baden-Powell-admiring schoolboy, through his signing up to the Army in 1915, to his adventures in places like the Somme, Ypres and Passchendaele. An incredible story indeed, proving once again that truth is stranger than fiction. **Ian Fry**

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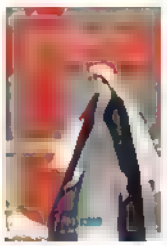
FASHION: WOMEN IN WORLD WAR ONE

Lucy Adlington *Pitkin Guides* **RRP £4.99**

★★★★



The Great War impacted on everyone's lives and was the catalyst for a shift in women's roles and freedoms. The influence of political events is clear to behold in women's fashions of the era, as they were forced to change their dress according to the constraints of practicality, textile availability and government propaganda.

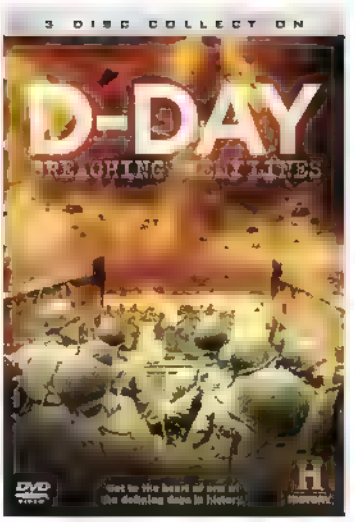
This book is a treasure trove of images from the period, including archive photos, adverts and sketches that bring to life the descriptions of women's changing lives and clothes. There's fascinating insight into how women became adept at recycling materials and using home-made beauty products to look their best, and how even women's underwear garments felt the hand of war – corsets were made more flexible to meet the needs of working women.

An approachable and educational read – great for fashion students and historians alike. **Anna Penniceard**

D-DAY: BREACHING ENEMY LINES

Dir: N/A *History* **RRP** £19.99

★★★★



On 6 June 1944, nearly 160,000 Allied troops came together from across the globe, crossed the English Channel in a mighty armada of ships and invaded Nazi Germany's so-called Fortress Europe at Normandy. It's an often-told tale and this year – the 70th anniversary of D-Day, of course – an abundance of material is being released to commemorate what is arguably history's most astonishing military feat. The History channel's contribution to this important and poignant anniversary is well researched and dramatically told, although – as a US-produced documentary – it's predictably slanted towards the American version of events.

D-Day: Breaching Enemy Lines is a smart-looking and neatly packaged three-disc DVD box set, and manages to pack in – through slick and judicious editing – just about everything that happened over that fateful period in history. You get everything from the invasion's strategic planning, through its top-secret build-up, to the bloody struggle for the beaches – including the carnage at Omaha and the US Rangers' audacious assault on the 100-metre cliff face at Pointe du Hoc – and the equally daring airborne operation that occurred in and. The documentary then goes on to explain, in pretty visceral fashion, the costly and spiteful battle of the *bocage* – or war of the hedgerows – that so ensnared the allies and strangled their advanced through Normandy for weeks, costing in the region of 425,000 casualties on both sides (to read more, see our feature on page 32 of this issue).

As one might expect from the History channel, *D-Day: Breaching Enemy Lines* is a somewhat populist re-telling of one of humanity's truly epic tales – but it's no less powerful for that. It combines archive footage of the brutal fighting, alongside a thoroughly heroic voiceover narrative with a sprinkling of expert opinion from best selling historians such as the late Stephen E Ambrose and John Keegan.

Where this DVD set really excels, however, is in the often incredibly-moving interviews with the now-old men who fought on both sides and witnessed their young comrades slaughtered next to them. Their testimonies are filled with startling insight into the mindset of the men with the rifles and the bayonets, who faced and survived mortal combat.

One former paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division recalls flying in with the first wave, seeing the sky above Normandy filled with aircraft, the darkness sliced apart by searchlights and exploding flak, and suddenly, in all that confusion, having an epiphany. "I can so vividly remember," he says, visibly still haunted, "how surprised I was that there were people down there on the ground trying to kill me."

The testimonies are filled with startling insight into the mindset of the men who faced and survived mortal combat

All in all, *D-Day: Breaching Enemy Lines* provides a comprehensive overview of what the commander of Operation Overlord, General Dwight Eisenhower, baptised "The Great Crusade". It's one that will no doubt satisfy those who are already familiar with the heroes and deeds of this staggering saga, but that will also serve as a powerful introduction to those lucky enough not to have heard the story. **Nick Soldinger**

THE GREAT WAR

Dir: N/A *Eagle Media* **RRP** £4.25

★★★

To mark the centenary of the start of the First World War (which you've no doubt heard a thing or two about), Eagle Media has jumped on the bandwagon and released not one but five DVDs about the conflict, under the heading "World War One: The Centenary Collection". Four of those are concerned with specific operations during the conflict and, while undoubtedly fascinating, are probably for serious enthusiasts only. The problem is that the one covering the entirety of the war – titled, predictably, *The Great War* – is a little too shallow to really grab your attention.

For a start, whoever was responsible for sourcing the archive footage appears to have had only one eye on the job – some of the clips herein seem rather random and don't really tie in with what the narrator is saying. Also, I found that the commentary seemed to go off the beaten track quite early doors, and I ended up confused after about ten minutes of the programme. At the end of the day, if you really have to cram a five-year conflict into the space of 100 minutes, you want to be getting down to the nitty-gritty – ie the scenes of battle – as soon as possible. Because, sadly, the horror of life in the trenches is what really characterised this tragic chapter.

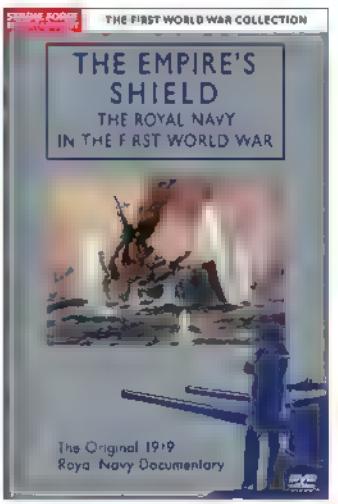
That's not to say that *The Great War* is a complete waste of a space in your DVD cabinet. It's dirt cheap, is nicely packaged and does have its share of interesting clips (even if there could have been a few more). But if you're a serious-ish history fan, I feel that there are much better offerings on the market. **Ed Sealey**

THE EMPIRE'S SHIELD

Dir: N/A *Strikeforce Entertainment*

RRP £14.99

★★★★


THE FIRST WORLD WAR COLLECTION
THE EMPIRE'S SHIELD
THE ROYAL NAVY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR
The Original 1919 Royal Navy Documentary

This documentary charting the Royal Navy's contribution during the First World War was made in 1919 and, with the exception of the occasional flashcard, is told entirely without words. We get to experience it much as its original audience would have done nearly a hundred years ago, complete with period Pianola soundtrack.

At around two and a half hours long, its subject matter is as comprehensive as it is intriguing, with the narrative broken up into 11 digestible "chapters". The first deals with the training of Navy cadets, revealing, among other things, that the Hornpipe dance was essentially an aerobics class aimed at improving sailors' fitness. The second focuses on the industrial might behind Britain's shipbuilding industry, while the third finally takes us out to sea with the transatlantic convoys.

Next, we are shown the terrifying power of the Edwardian battleship, with the bombardment of Zeebrugge as filmed from the deck of one, before getting an insight into the complex role of mine-sweepers.

Chapters on the nascent Royal Navy Air Service follow, with footage of the earliest carriers, and seaplanes. The film then concludes with chapters on the Grand Fleet, and includes footage of a Royal visit by George V, delighted-looking seadogs receiving their rum ration, before climaxing with a live gun- and torpedo exercise at sea.

Clearly filmed as propaganda back in 1919, *The Empire's Shield* today is fascinating stuff that will not only enthrall Royal Navy enthusiasts, but also have proper history nerds enthusiastically stroking their chins. **Nick Soldinger**

THE PATROL

Dir: Tom Petch *Soda Pictures* **RRP £9**

★★★★★

A terrific little British war film set at the start of the Afghanistan campaign, this was – predictably, given that it emerged into a climate of unquestioning Help For Heroes tub-thumping – overlooked by the cinema-going public. The reason for this is that it's an exploration of the psychology of men going into war and slowly coming to realise that they may have been misled as to the nature of the task ahead of them, and the enemy they're fighting.

There's a real air of authenticity to it – one of the film's poster screamers dubs it "Britain's answer to *The Hurt Locker*", though there's none of the grandstanding or gung-ho heroics of that film. These are real men, as opposed to Jeremy Renner being a "real man" and wading into bomb-disposal sites like a bull in an exploding china shop. The film's writer-director, Tom Petch, was a serving squaddie for eight years, having done stints in – among other places – Cambodia and the Middle East, so he has an ear for military language, codes of honour and interaction that can't really be called into question. He also, one assumes, has a pretty good idea of how life can quickly become surreal and disorderly when you're isolated in a small team of men in the middle of nowhere, as the men of *The Patrol* quickly find themselves; and that when things start to malfunction – both in the physical world and in one's own mind – the structure of a unit starts to disintegrate very quickly.

You won't find much in the way of pyrotechnics here – *The Patrol* is smarter, and indeed better, than that. **Pete Cashmore**

LEE & GRANT

Dir: N/A *History* **RRP £9.99**

★★★

Originally made for the History channel, this TV programme focuses on the American Civil War's two main protagonists: commander of the Confederate Army Robert E Lee, and Union Army General Ulysses S Grant.

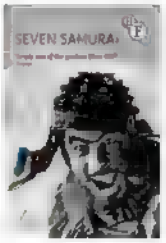
The programme plots the path of the two men, who hailed from disparate backgrounds, with Grant the son of an anonymous animal-hide tanner, and Lee coming from a distinguished line of military officers. It's nicely produced, with plenty of dynamic CGI, animated maps and re-enactments. It ably captures the scope of the four-year conflict, if not the finer details.

You get a clear sense of the men and their personal lives, but the programme also serves to remind us that, like most wars, the eventual outcome was as much due to the vagaries of random chance as military strategy. *Lee & Grant* is a decent introduction to the Civil War, but will no doubt leave you wanting more. **Steve Jarratt**

SEVEN SAMURAI: BFI 60TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Dir: Akira Kurosawa *BFI* **RRP £20**

★★★★★



If you Google the phrase "the greatest film ever made", you get nearly a million hits. Downgrade that to "one of the greatest films ever made" and it shrinks to 642,000. The topic is, it's fair to say, one that inspires a great deal of debate. But few would argue that Akiro Kurosawa's 1954 epic *Seven Samurai* would be in the mix, in terms of scale, beauty and narrative innovation.

Its influence on films in other genres, like *The Magnificent Seven*, is well documented. The titular Samurai are masterless ronin protecting a village's crops during a famine in 16th-century rural Japan, and are a flawed and disparate bunch. Themes of honour and the civilian's relationship with the warrior predominate – and it also helps that the battle scenes, in particular the final defence of the village, are jaw-dropping. An uncommonly unpoetic offering at the time. **Pete Cashmore**

THE BATTLE

Dir: Rafa Lara *Anchor Bay* **RRP £8**

★★★★

It would be stretching it a bit to call Rafa Lara's telling of the events building up to (and, of course, the unfolding of) the 1862 Battle of Puebla an epic, but this Mexico-centric rendering of the story is the host nation's biggest-budget film of all time, and has no small amount of appeal to those of us who enjoy seeing moustache-twirling bad guys getting their comeuppance on the battlefield.

Outnumbered and undergunned, the men of the Cinco De Maia battle somehow managed to drive back French invaders as they marched towards Mexico City, and although *The Battle* unwisely throws in a superfluous romantic subplot and hams the French leaders up to Foreign Villain Factor 11, the tension leading up to the final, 30-minute battle is skilfully executed. The subsequent carnage owes a good deal to the frenetic, dizzying style of the opening of *Saving Private Ryan*, which can only be a good thing. **Pete Cashmore**

LOVE AND HONOR

Dir: Danny Mooney *High Fliers* **RRP £12**

★★★★

If you're looking for a war film that's full of action, step away from this DVD. There's a smattering in the first ten minutes but, beyond that, the Vietnam War is more of a subplot than the central theme.

At the heart of *Love And Honor* is, as the title suggests, love – specifically, the romance between Dalton, fighting in the jungles of Vietnam, and his girlfriend, Jane, back home in the US. When he's dumped by letter, Dalton decides to use his week's leave to win Jane back. The film then dips its toes into the anti-war argument, as a means to cause conflict in the key characters' relationship.

The cast put in solid performances, with Liam Hemsworth believable as Mickey Wright, and the plot is easy to follow. OK, so it's a poor cousin of *Pearl Harbor* – a romance with a bit of war – but it's a good choice for a not-too-taxing night in. Just don't go expecting an explosion fest. **Anna Penniceard**

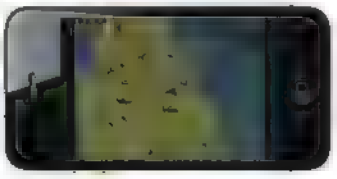
GLORY OF GENERALS

iPhone/Android app *EasyTech* **Free**

★★★★

As someone who remembers playing old-school games like *Allied General*, I welcomed this simplistic app where WWII military icons battle across tactical European maps. The graphics are good, if small (they can be enlarged if you struggle), and a basic challenge for each level parallels a more advanced objective.

Choosing to be either Axis or Allied forces, you can simply enjoy hashing it out, or take your time and tactically compete for glory locations – cities etc. Once familiarised with the array of unlabelled pictograms, the commissioning, manoeuvring and entrenchment of infantry, armour or artillery becomes fluid. Beginning with the evacuation of Dunkirk, Nazis then occupy the south of Britain (outrageous!). Kicking them out again with ground action and air or sea bombardments was very satisfying. **Robin Worboyes**



MODERN WAR

iPhone/Android app *Funzio Inc* **Free**

★★★★

Given the ongoing fractious state of the world, and the way in which we seem to be limbering up to go ploughing into Nigeria, to sing the praises of any app that reduces 21st-century war into a (it has to be said, fun) game of strategy seems a tad insensitive. But hey, as the man said, war is hell regardless of whether said fun apps exist or not.

In *Modern War*, you're given the task of running the military machine of one of the world's superpowers – yes, the UK is one of them – slowly building up your inventory and weaponry until you're ready to start taking the fight to your global enemies. And impressively, there are a good 300 missions to undertake along the way. My tip is to play as one of the "bad guys" – China, Iran or Russia. There's something to be said about taking on the might of the West on your way home from work. **Pete Cashmore**

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WAR in NUMBERS

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Quantifying the 1936-39 war between the **Republicans** and the **Nationalists**

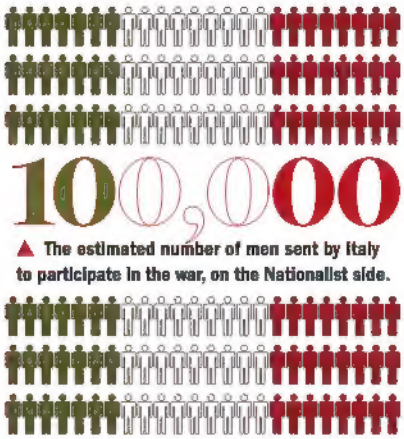
▲ The estimated number of people executed by the Nationalists during and after the war. The Republicans executed up to 72,000.

24 MILLION

▲ The approximate population of Spain in 1936.

£43 MILLION

▲ The amount of money Adolf Hitler's Germany donated to the right-wing Nationalists over the course of the conflict to bolster their resources.



100,000

▲ The estimated number of men sent by Italy to participate in the war, on the Nationalist side.

987

▲ The number of days the conflict lasted, from 18 July 1936 to 1 April 1939.

63

◀ The origins of the war are said to have dated back 63 years before its outbreak, to the proclamation of the First Spanish Republic.

1,000,000

▲ Up to a million lives were lost, making it Spain's most devastating conflict ever (it was non-belligerent during both World Wars).

36

▲ Following the Nationalists' victory in 1939, Spain suffered 36 years under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco until his death in 1975. Franco established concentration camps and forced labour, and ordered executions.

110,000

▲ The estimated number of Republican troops killed in combat.

90,000

▲ The estimated number of Nationalist troops killed in combat.

2

▲ The war was fought between two groups: the leftist Republicans, who were in government at the time, and the right-wing Nationalists.

▼ The number of civilians killed in German-conducted bombing of Guernica in April 1937, the first-ever deliberate aerial bombing of a city.

30,000-35,000

▲ The estimated number of children who were evacuated from the Republican zone during the war. Some of these ended up in the UK.

Mary Evans

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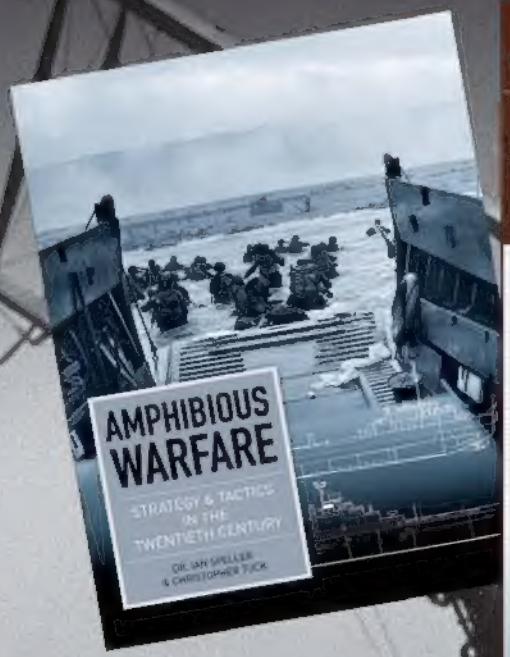

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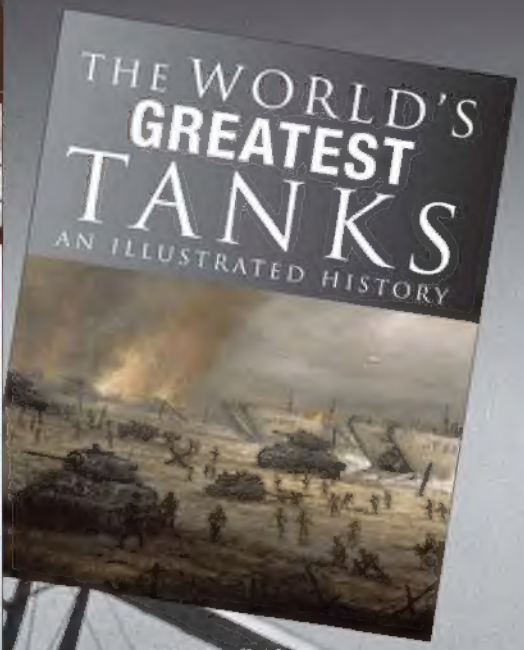

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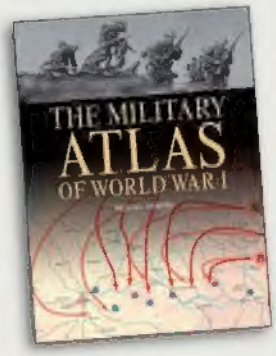

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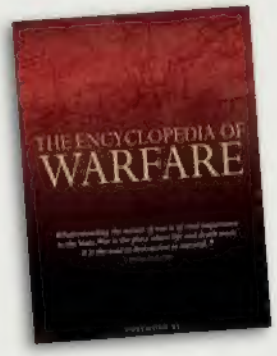

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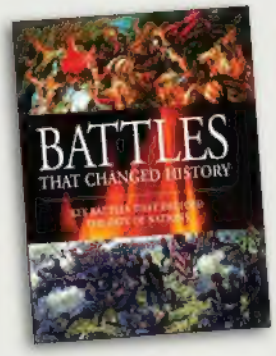

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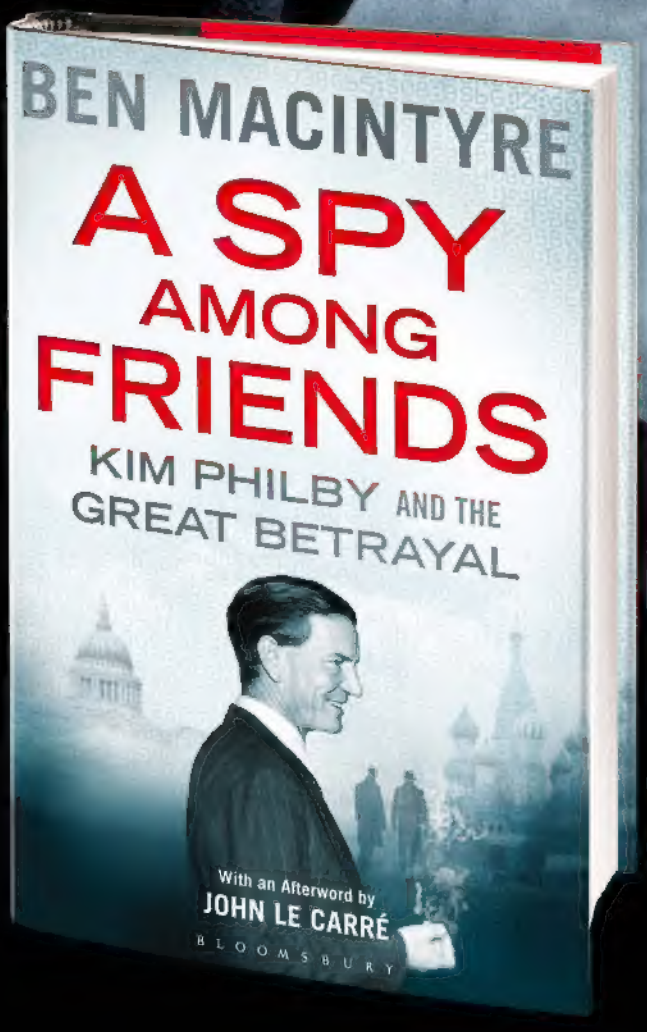

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